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Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle

IG JOHN TATE (1955-1998) THE SAD DEMISE OF A FALLEN HERO

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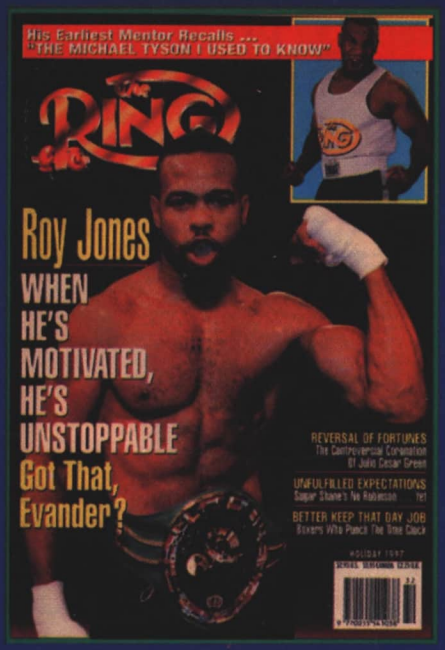

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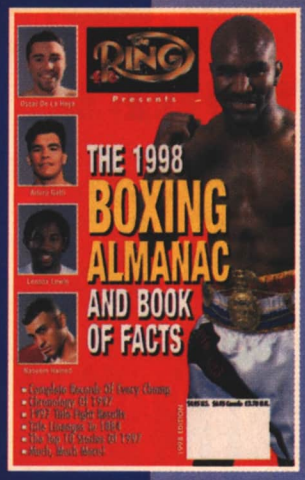

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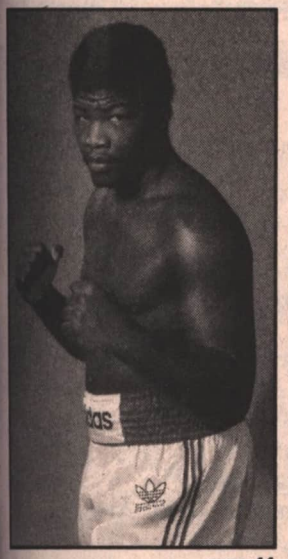

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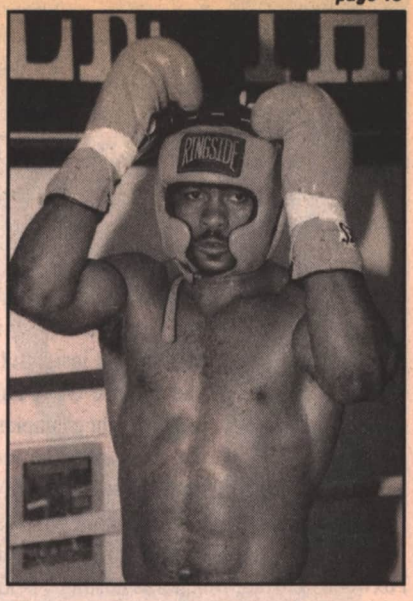

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RINGSIDE

Sometimes the story behind the story adds significantly to the story itself, which is certainly the case with Robert Mladinich's insightful and heartfelt piece, "Big John Tate: The Sad Demise Of A Fallen Hero" *(page 44)*. The former WBA heavyweight champion had pretty much dropped out of the boxing scene after he retired in 1988. The only news of him in recent years had been of the police-blotter variety, documenting his problems with drugs and petty crime. But in February, Mladinich noticed Tate in the dressing room area of the Foxwoods Casino, which was hosting a boxing card that night.

"He'd changed a lot, but I recognized him by his smile," said Mladinich. "In fact, I was surprised that nobody else recognized him. He was excited, elated even, when I approached him, and eager to talk."

Mladinich had been a Tate fan since the 1976 Olympics, when he had been impressed with Big John's gallant, albeit losing, effort against Cuban dreadnought Teofilo Stevenson.

"He went into the Stevenson fight with a cut over his eye from a previous match," recalled Mladinich. "Everybody else knew that even a tap on the cut would end the fight, but John seemed fearless."

When Mladinich told me of his chance meeting with Tate, I asked him to interview the ex-champ in greater detail in preparation for a full-length article. Pinning down Tate proved difficult, but through intermediaries in Knoxville, Tennessee, Mladinich arranged to meet the fighter in his hometown. Then came the news that Tate had had a stroke and died while driving early one morning about six weeks after their meeting in Connecticut.

"I was shocked and saddened," said Mladinich. "John had touched a cord in me that went beyond the normal writer-fighter relationship."

In the often cold reality of journalism, Tate's death made the proposed article a much more important story than the update originally planned, turning it into the final chapter of a classic human tragedy.

"Emotionally, his death was tough on me as a person, but as a writer, it actually made the story easier to write," said Mladinich. "Before John's death, I knew it wasn't going to be a happy story, but I was going to try to be as upbeat as possible.

"It was easy to dismiss Tate as a big dummy. But there was a wisdom and simple eloquence about him that went beyond the image most of the media had given him. As a black man, he received a lot of criticism for fighting Gerrie Coetzee in South Africa, but when he came back with the title, he said something to the effect that all black people didn't have to hate white people. When we spoke in Connecticut, he seemed to be edging his way back into boxing, and it was obvious that he still had hopes and dreams, and was looking for a new beginning."

To the best of my knowledge, the interview Mladinich conducted at Foxwoods was the last Tate ever gave. The resulting article is a final testament to the humanity of a man who was often misunderstood and maligned during his lifetime. It's the sort of story Big John would probably have appreciated, and unquestionably one I'm proud to present in the pages of THE RING.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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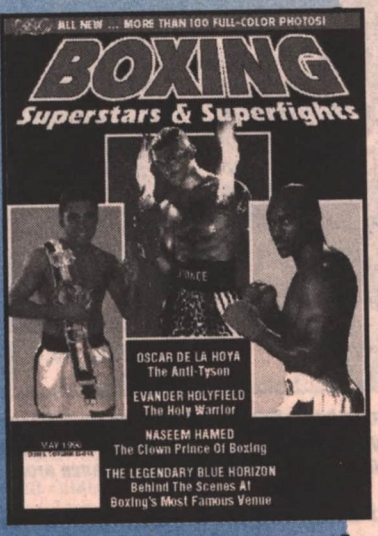

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COME OUT WRITING

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HEAVY DOSE OF EXCITEMENT

Even though Shannon Briggs lost his fight with WBC heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis, he surprised me with the way in stayed in the fight. It reminded me of another thrilling match between WBA king Evander Holyfield and IBF titlist Michael Moorer in November. Both fights were action-packed contests featuring multiple knockdowns. This is what the division sorely needs, considering recent debacles like Holyfield-Tyson II, Lewis-McCall, and Lewis-Akinwande.

Briggs and Moorer came to fight, which created the type of brawls that fans want to see. Maybe these two "losers" should face each other in an eliminator. This would be a solid matchup. If Moorer wins, he fights Lewis. If Briggs wins, he goes up against Holyfield. Lewis-Moorer and Holyfield-Briggs are fights worth seeing.

LARRY PIETTE
Honolulu, HI

THE SECRET TO HAMED

I have a few suggestions for the next guy that fights "Prince" Naseem Hamed: 1) Do *not* run after him; he runs faster than you; 2) Do *not* box him; he will counterpunch you at incredible speed from any angle, and with explosive force; 3) *Do* stay in the middle of the ring with your guard up closed like a shell; he'll dance around you and look foolish; 4) He *will* be compelled to come to you while remaining completely open; play his game in reverse and counterpunch him; 5) If you have no punch, do *not* sign the contract.

JEAN-PAUL MERCKX
Belgium

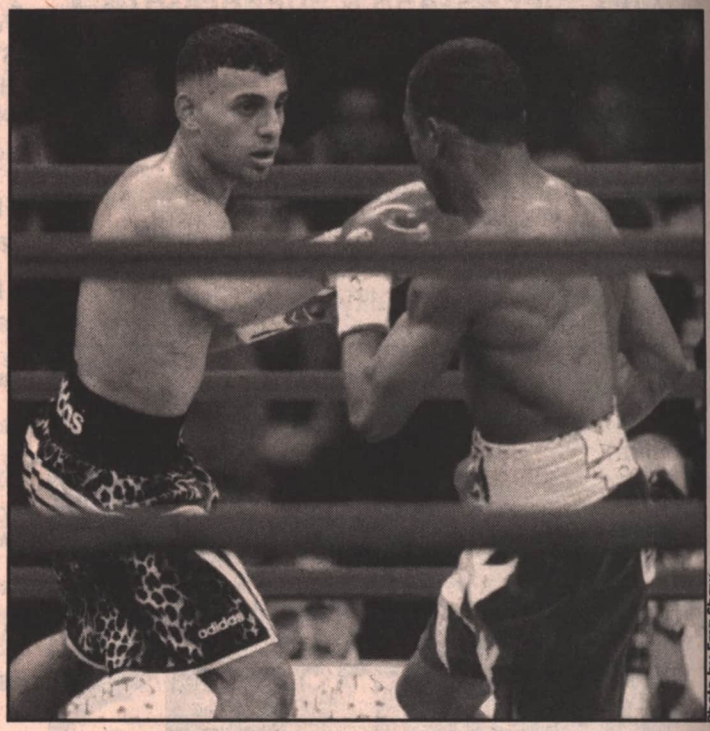


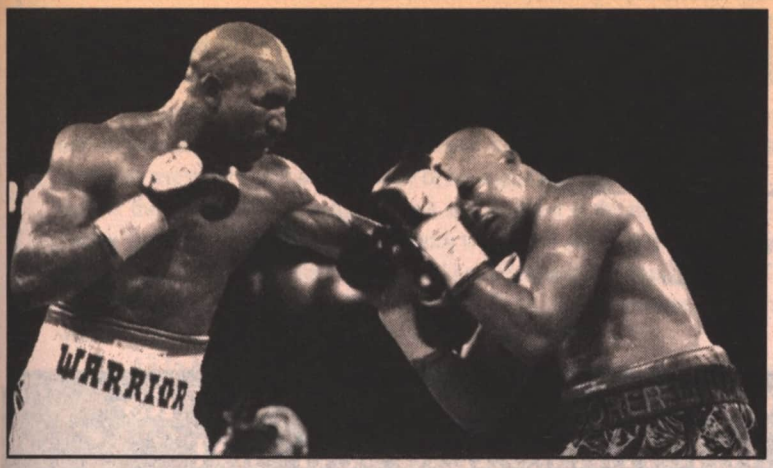
Photo by Ezra Shaw

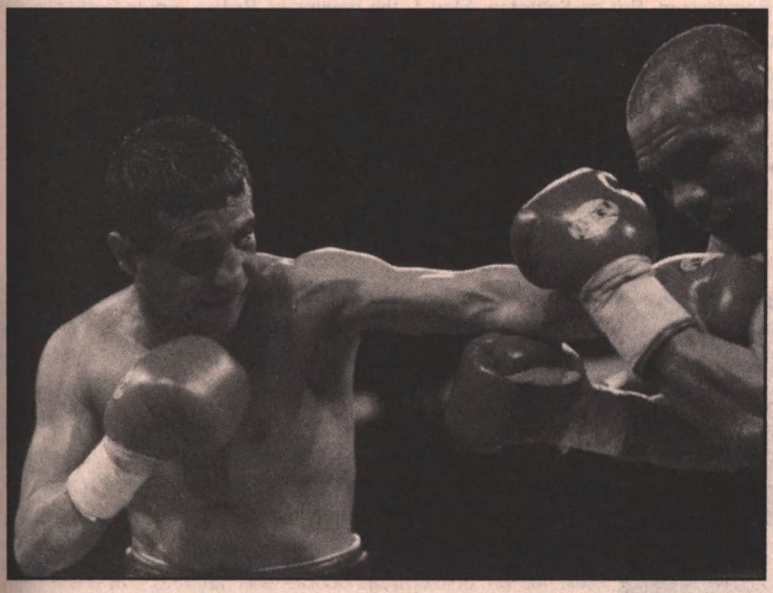
Want to beat "Prince" Naseem Hamed? Reader Jean-Paul Merckx, from Belgium, suggests you don't try to run from him and don't try to box him, but rather stay in the middle of the ring and let him dance around you.

TYSON'S LIKE LISTON

Mike Tyson's place in boxing history will probably be somewhere alongside that of Sonny Liston. I say this because of all the similarities between the two men and their careers. First, they were intimidating, and deemed invincible. Second, they both rose and fell in their careers in similar fashion.

In the same way that Liston destroyed Floyd Patterson in one round to win the title, Tyson destroyed Michael Spinks in one round to be officially recognized as the undisputed heavyweight champion. Both Patterson and Spinks were smaller, thinner fighters with fast hands. Liston and





Evander Holyfield (above) and Johnny Tapia (below) are included in a rare group of shining lights in boxing today, writes Steven Koehane. They are "true warriors" who fight tough opponents, instead of talking a good game while taking on dubious foes.

Tyson, however, lost respect after their matches with Ali and Holyfield, respectively. I find it ironic that Tyson and Liston were supposed to go down in history as undefeated, all-time greats, who are now replaced in the history books by the two men that beat them.

Now Tyson and Liston are remembered more now as nothing more than overrated bullies, and should be placed in some sort of limbo in boxing history.

JOSH MICKELSON
Madison, WI

BOXING IN THE DARK

I hate to say it, but boxing is in its darkest hours, unless fighters stop talking and start fighting like past warriors did. How many times do I hear of Trinidad, Whitaker, Lewis, Tyson, Quartey, and especially Jones saying they want quality opponents? Then they end up fighting has-beens or never-will-bes. I think the true warriors of boxing today are Gatti, Holyfield, Tapia, underrated Hopkins, and Manfredy. Money is not the issue, integrity is.

STEVEN KOEHANE
Somerville, MD

CONNECTICUT COOKS

What's going on in Connecticut? With the Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods Casino adding to the excitement in the state, it appears this part of the country is becoming a very visible place for boxing.

In just one month, I've seen Lawrence Clay-Bey, Israel Cardona, Eric Harding, John Scully, and Angel Vazquez register nationally televised victories. When Marlon Starling retired in 1990, I thought it signalled the end of boxing in Hartford. Other than Scully, the last several years have seen very few boxers from the city make it to main event status. Here in 1998, however, things are looking so much brighter it is amazing. Scully has already challenged for a world title, while Vazquez and Cardona are likely to make their first attempts at world titles later this year. Clay-Bey and Harding have shown no reason why they won't do the same in the future.

As a lifelong fan who has seen Willie Pep and Starling, I am not alone when I say I am very excited about the future of these boxers, and Connecticut boxing as a whole.

THOMAS MOOREHOUSE
Willimantic, CT

FORGET IT, MARK

There is no way in hell that Mark Johnson would beat either Johnny Tapia or Danny Romero. Tapia is faster than Johnson and has been in many more wars. I've seen Johnson have a tough time with inexperienced Angel Almena. If Romero hit Johnson like Almena did, the night would be over quickly for Johnson.

TOMMY MOLINA
Grants, NM

LAMPLEY LAPSE

I want to start by saying that HBO is without a doubt the king of prime time boxing. Larry Merchant and Jim Lampley pull no punches when they talk about HBO fighters, and Lampley has one of the most electrifying voices in all of sports. This is why I will forgive Lampley for saying that Naseem Hamed is the most exciting boxer in the sport today. Are you kidding, Jim? I have one word for you—GATTI!

There is not now, nor has there ever been in years, a fighter as exciting and thrilling as Arturo Gatti in the ring. I do admit that Hamed vs. Kevin Kelley was a very exciting fight, but let's face it, Gatti fights opponents with real chins, and still finds a way to make every fight a potential Fight of the Year.

Because you are one of the two best commentators in boxing today, I will forgive you this time, Jim. Just remember, though, if I wanted to hear biased opinions of fighters just to make the fighter and the station look good, I would watch one of those boring Showtime fights.

MICHAEL THOMPSON
Norton, MA ■

ROUND ONE

ENGLISHMAN OLIVER RECOVERS SWIFTLY, BOXING MAY NOT

The talk was of world titles, "Prince" Naseem Hamed, and a career that would transport him to the pinnacle of his profession. But on Saturday, May 5, the dreams of British junior featherweight Spencer Oliver yielded to a harsh reality of the hardest game, that however fanciful a fighter's aspirations, the one undeniable truth is the risk he takes. Though he may not see it quite like this yet—for he is still probably wrestling with the injustice that his promising career is over at 23—Oliver should never regret that the baubles of the fight game will forever remain out of his reach. No trinket, no matter how much it proves you are a man, is worth it if you end up dead in its pursuit.

Thankfully, Oliver survived, though for a while the signs for a fighter known as "The Omen" were ominous. Oliver, a nice kid who accepted the Bert Young Boxer of the Year award at the British Boxing Writers' annual dinner just nine days earlier, was stopped in the 10th round of a grueling encounter for the European 122-pound title by unheralded Ukrainian Sergei Devakov at London's Royal Albert Hall. He collapsed and was stretchered from the ring to the operating theater of the National Neurological and Neurosurgery Hospital. Oliver spent three hours in surgery while a clot was removed from his brain, and two further days in a coma before coming to and starting a remarkable recovery.

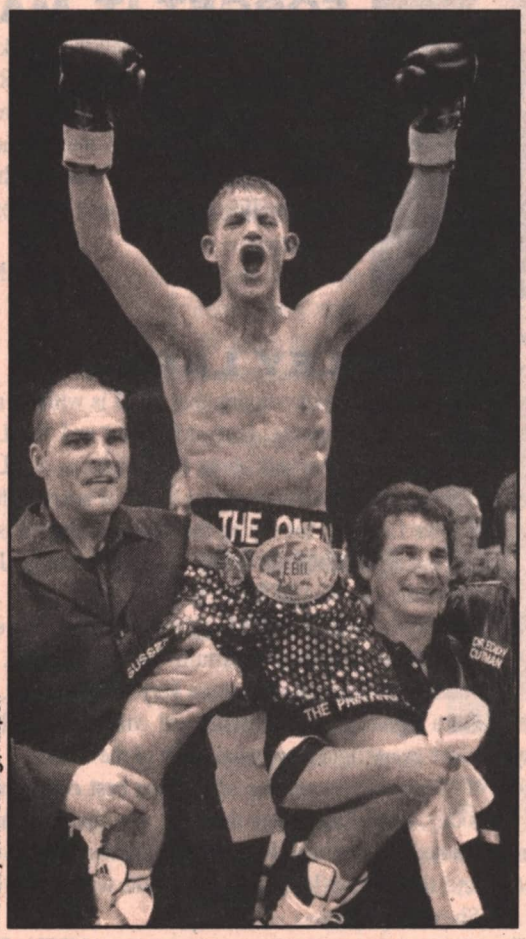


Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

Oliver, celebrating a win last year, was not so lucky against Devakov

The relief on the faces of his distraught girlfriend, Louise, and the rest of his family, including grandfather Charlie, who years before boxed in the booths, was tangible. But it was nothing compared to the joy felt by Oliver when he clasped his two-year-old son, Kane, in his hospital bed.

"It was a very emotional moment for everybody at his bedside," said Oliver's manager, Jess Harding. "My big fear was that Spencer would end up severely brain damaged, which may have affected his sight, speech, or mobility. But when I walked up to him just a few days later, he was really buzzing and using every swear word he could think of. He screamed at me, 'Get me out of this place. I want to go home.' Thank goodness he seems to have made a complete recovery already. I am doubly delighted there is nothing wrong with his memory. He owes me 50 quid."

Harding's delight is shared by all in the fight fraternity, though hard questions remain. Does making weight for championship contests render fighters unavoidably vulnerable if they have let their bodies dehydrate? Does the heat emanating from overhead TV lights increase the danger? Should young men driven by competition and intent on glory be allowed to fight to make a living?

Maybe we should just be thankful that Spencer Oliver is still around to deliver his response.

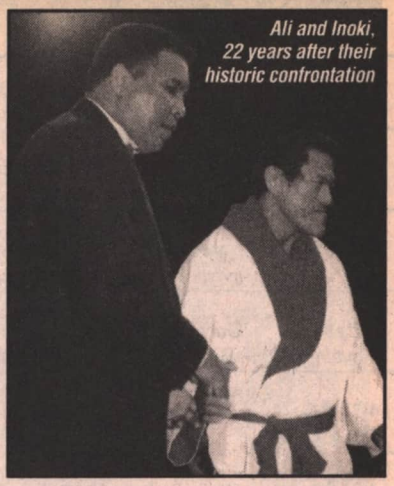
—Brian Doogan

ALI HELPS WRESTLER CELEBRATE RETIREMENT

Muhammad Ali's 1976 boxer vs. wrestler bout against Japan's Antonio Inoki is remembered as a boring farce by boxing fans, but it remains an important historical event to the pro wrestling community. Aware of his significant role in Inoki's career, Ali was on hand at the Tokyo Dome on April 4 as a special guest at the retirement party of the legendary Inoki, 55. Ali stood by the entrance to the ring and lit a torch symbolic of his '96 Olympic experience, then handed it to Inoki as he entered the ring in front of 70,000 adoring fans for his final match. Since happy endings can be guaranteed in the world of wrestling, it was no surprise that Inoki went out with a victory.

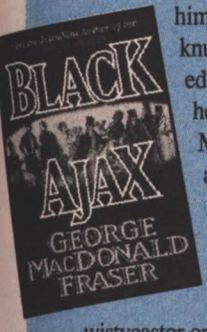
The Ali-Inoki match on June 26, 1976, was an unscripted event, but it almost certainly would have been more entertaining had the standards of pro wrestling been employed. For 15 rounds, Inoki lay on his back and kicked at Ali, and the contest ended in a disappointing draw. If anyone came away the loser, however, it was Ali, who suffered nerve damage in his legs as a result of Inoki's unique style. Not one to hold a grudge, though, "The Greatest" was glad to lend his presence to Inoki's farewell.

—Eric Raskin



Ali and Inoki, 22 years after their historic confrontation

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



One hundred eighty-two years after his death, Tom Molineaux is on a roll. Last year, the ex-slave from Virginia whose fists won him freedom and acclaim as one of the best bare-knuckle fighters of the early-19th century was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Now he is the subject of a historical novel by George MacDonald Fraser that was pure pleasure to read and more so to recommend to fans of ring history and literature.

Black Ajax (Carroll & Graf Publishers Inc., $23, 249 pages) is, to borrow one of the terms fancied by the Fancy in that colorful time, a wistycastor on all counts. It is wonderfully written and arranged (and, thanks to the glossary of early-19th century boxing and social terms in the rear of the book, is easily comprehensible even to fans whose boxing vocabularies have been molded by the commentaries of Sean O'Grady and Al Bernstein), historically accurate, and totally engrossing. The book takes us, via narratives by characters in the story such as Molineaux's trainer Bill Richmond, legendary chronicler of fistiana Pierce Egan, and Fraser's recurring fictional character, Buckley Flashman, up to and through Molineaux's two apocalyptic meetings with Tom Cribb, champion of England.

A warning, though: If you are heavily into political correctness and cheer for those who want *Huckleberry Finn* banished from high school reading lists because it uses the social idiom of the era it represents, you'd be better off sending a donation to the ACLU than buying *Black Ajax*. But if you're that dicked in the nob, as the old expression goes, you probably wouldn't or shouldn't be a boxing fan to begin with.

This is an educational and entertaining book about an era in boxing that makes some modern warriors look like guys doing Truman Capote imitations. Like too many of the latter, poor Tom Molineaux, for all his talent, was clearly a victim of his own foibles and self-destructive behavior. Fraser's portrait of him is full-bodied, touching, and dignified.

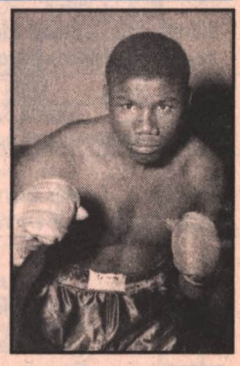
—Pete Ehrmann

BIVINS BUMMER

In one of the saddest cases of neglect and mistreatment imaginable, 1940s heavyweight and light heavyweight contender Jimmy Bivins was found by police in April wasting away in the attic of his daughter's Cleveland, Ohio, home. Bivins, 78, weighed a frighteningly low 110 pounds when he was discovered wrapped in a urine-soaked blanket stained with excrement. In addition to his body being covered with bedsores, one of Bivins' fingers required surgery to mend a deep cut resulting from his attempts to open a can with a fillet knife. Though Bivins did not know the day of the week, he was alert enough to recall his birthdate and social security number.

It is truly a pitiful state for a fighter who was once so physically exceptional. Among the finest boxers never to be granted a title shot, Bivins tallied victories over such greats as Archie Moore, Ezzard Charles, Lloyd Marshall, and Joey Maxim, while also going the distance with the likes of Jersey Joe Walcott, Harold Johnson, and Joe Louis. His 1951 fight with Louis in Baltimore earned Bivins $40,000, the biggest payday of his career.

Bivins reportedly told Cleveland's WEWS-TV in a bedside interview the day he was found that he didn't think he was mistreated.



Bivins: Former contender survives horrific plight

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
4-14-98	Fernando Vargas KO 2 Romallis Ellis	USA	jm	C+	B	C+
Vargas is the goods, but this is deceiving; Ellis no longer near world class						
4-14-98	Andrew Golota KO 6 Eli Dixon	USA	h	B-	C-	C
Roll up the windows and lock the doors; he's back						
4-18-98	Naseem Hamed KO 7 Wilfredo Vazquez	HBO	f	A	B+	B
Five years ago, maybe this goes the other way—maybe						
4-20-98	Guty Espadas W 10 Agapito Sanchez	FOXSN	f	B	B-	A-
Espadas' ninth-round knockdown allows him to squeak by with majority decision						
4-21-98	Larry Donald W 10 Ross Puritty	USA	h	C	B+	C-
Jab, jab, clinch ... jab, jab, clinch ...						
4-21-98	Hasim Rahman KO 2 Steve Pannell	USA	h	B+	C+	B-
It's time for "The Rock" to take on a top-five opponent						
4-25-98	Roy Jones KO 4 Virgil Hill	HBO	lh	A+	A-	A
This is what it looks like when the sport's most talented fighter gets busy						
4-28-98	Demetrius Davis W 10 Joseph Kiwanuka	USA	sm	B-	A	B-
Has anyone ever fallen faster than Kiwanuka?						
4-28-98	Thomas Tate KO 3 Anwar Oshana	USA	sm	B+	B+	A-
Rejuvenated Tate stays in the hunt with highlight-film kayo						
5-1-98	Adan Vargas W 12 Ancee Gedeon	FOXSN	b	B	A-	B
If anyone at 118 deserves a title shot, it's Vargas						
5-2-98	**Hassine Cherifi W 12 Keith Holmes**	**Show**	**WBC m**	**A-**	**C+**	**B**
Upset! Scrappy Cherifi outhustles Holmes to take title						
5-2-98	**Fabrice Tiozzo KO 1 Terry Ray**	**Show**	**WBA c**	**A**	**D**	**C-**
Ray exits without a struggle; where's Kenny Keene when you need him?						
5-5-98	Vassiliy Jirov W 12 Rich LaMontagne	USA	c	C-	A	C+
Jirov won't win any beauty contests, but maybe he can fight just a little after all						
5-5-98	Robert Daniels KO 10 Don Diego Poeder	USA	c	B-	B+	B
Didn't we all know this was bound to happen eventually?						
5-9-98	David Reid KO 2 Nick Rupa	HBO	jm	B+	A+	A-
Rupa went 10 tough rounds with Terry Norris last year. Any questions?						
5-9-98	**Shane Mosley KO 8 John-John Molina**	**HBO**	**IBF l**	**A**	**B-**	**B-**
Sugar Shane looking better each time out; Molina dissected						
5-12-98	Ahmed Santos W 10 Billy Irwin	USA	jw	C	A-	B-
Irwin's grit not enough against more talented Santos; good scrap, though						
5-12-98	Otis Grant Tech. Dec. 8 Ernesto Sena	USA	m	B	D	C
Bland Grant wins every round before headbutt brings on cut						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Former junior welterweight champion **Kostya Tszyu** lost his court battle with former promoter **Bill Mordey** and will have to pay over $7-million to the man he parted ways with in 1995. The court's ruling stated that Tszyu had violated his contract by boxing in contests not promoted by Mordey. According to Tszyu's manager, **Vlad Warton**, the boxer plans to appeal ... The bad news keeps piling up for two-division former champ **Meldrick Taylor**. He squandered the millions he made during his ring career, was accused last October of insurance fraud, and clearly is not even close to the championship-caliber fighter he once was. Still, he was planning a comeback fight against **Lonnie Smith** on May 16 in Atlantic City, but **Larry Hazzard**, the head of the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board, nixed the fight in mid-April. Though he had not yet received the results of Taylor's medical exams, Hazzard pulled the plug because he felt Taylor's "skills have eroded to a point where I believe he should not be permitted to fight" ... **Naseem Hamed's** popularity in America was further verified when the ratings for his second HBO fight, against **Wilfredo Vazquez** on April 18 in England, were released. The featherweight bout scored a 10.2 Nielsen rating, up slightly from the impressive 10.1 in Hamed's HBO debut against **Kevin Kelley** last year. That mark made the Hamed-Vazquez fight HBO's highest rated boxing match to that point in 1998, ahead of the **Arturo Gatti-Angel Manfredy** shootout as well as **Lennox Lewis'** heavyweight title defense against **Shannon Briggs** ... **Joe Frazier**, accused of drunken driving on April 7 in North Philadelphia, rejected an offer by the district attorney's office to enter into a five-week drunken-driving program and have his record subsequently cleared. The ex-heavyweight champ claimed his high blood pressure, not alcohol, was to blame for his unsteady driving. "I want to be tried and cleared," he said. "I know I can win this one" ... Former WBA heavyweight champion **Bruce Seldon** admitted in Superior Court in Camden, New Jersey, on May 6, that he provided a 15-year-old girl with marijuana and engaged in "sexual activity" with her at his house in November of '97. Seldon insisted he didn't know she was under 18. Sentencing was set for June 26, and Seldon could face a maximum five-year prison sentence ... Renowned boxing referee, historian, and editor **Lew Eskin** died in May of a heart attack at his print shop in Vernon, New York. Eskin, 72, was best known for editing *Boxing Illustrated* in the 1960s and early-'70s.

Tszyu: $7-million in the hole

Frazier: Professes his innocence

THE PUNCHLINES

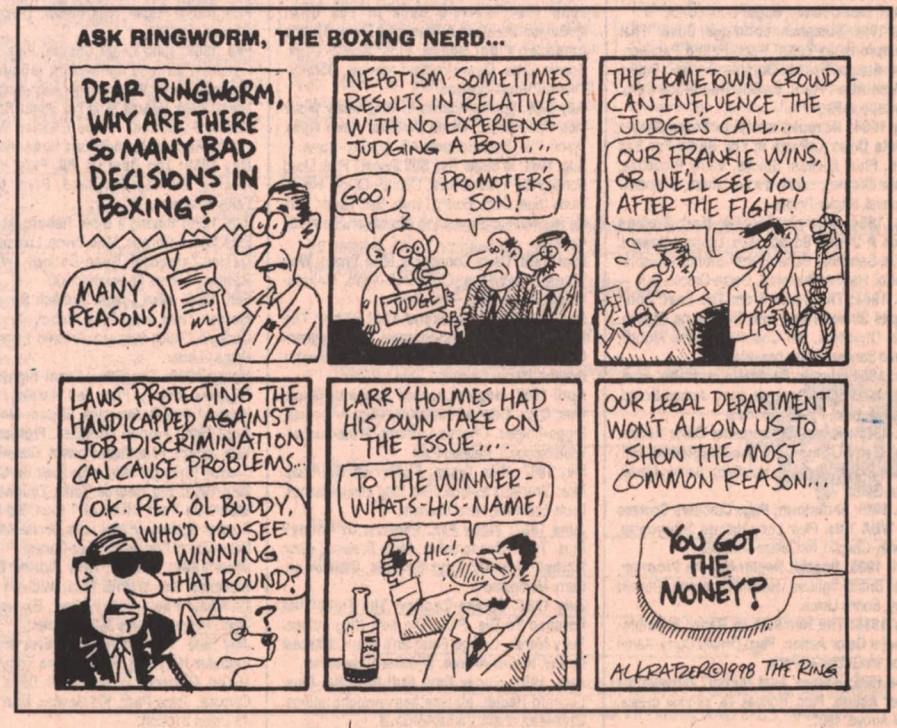
"If I ever have to do [a drug test again], I'm not letting my urine out of my sight ... I'm going where my urine is."

—Pernell Whitaker, continuing to refute the results of his multiple failed drug tests

"I don't know why in the world I was mentioned with guys who have fathered seven kids and don't take care of them. I love my kid and I see him every chance I get."

—Oscar De La Hoya, responding to the cover story of the May 4 *Sports Illustrated* that listed him among professional sports' deadbeat dads.

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



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Dec. 1984: Hagler Hammers Hamsho. Plus: Barry McGuigan, boxing's best, James Broad, Julian Jackson, Pinklon Thomas.

Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

April 1985: Special Hagler-Hearns Program. Plus: British fighters, Hector Camacho, Donald Curry, Sonny Liston.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

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July 1985: Marvelous Marvin! Are There Any More Mountains To Climb? Plus: Chavez, Tyson, Tubbs, Sullivan, great first rounds.

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Sept. 1985: Barry McGuigan: Can He Be Boxing's Savior? Plus: Truth Williams, Tyrell Biggs, Greg Richardson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Paul-Blake, Witherspoon-Bonecrusher, Berbick-Bey, Pinklon Thomas.

Oct. 1985: The "Macho Man" Rides Again. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Berbick-Green, John E. Garcia, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, McCallum-Braxton.

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Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

March 1986 (Awards Issue): Co-Fighters Of The Year: Marvelous Marvin Hagler & Donald Curry. Plus: Ring's Annual Awards, Evander Holyfield, Williamson-Muhammad, Camacho-Roach, 1985 boxing diary.

April 1986: Witherspoon Tames Tubbs For WBA Title. Plus: Dream fights, Greg Haugen, Tyrell Biggs, Mark Breland, Paul Gonzales, HBO tourney, Witherspoon-Tubbs, Frank Warren, Gene Tunney.

May 1986: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Hearns-Shuler, Mike Tyson, Bramble-Crawley, Sandoval-Canizales, Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Arguello-Costello, Weaver-Williams.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

July 1986: Spinks-Holmes II: Who Really Won? Plus: Frank Bruno, Richie Sandoval, Kevin Watts, Tyson-Tillis, Boza-Edwards-Alli, Johnson-Burns.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

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April 1987: Hagler-Leonard Souvenir Issue. Plus: Czyz, Orlando Canizales, Mugabi-Thomas, Biggs-Snipes, Chavez-LaPorte, Bonecrusher-Witherspoon II, Haugen-Paul.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, *The Ring* annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

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July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new *Ring* ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Aug. 1987: Sugar Ray: Still In Style. Plus: Leonard-Hagler, all-time heavyweight ratings, Czyz-MacDonald, Camacho-Davis.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn-Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Rocky Lockridge & Roger Mayweather, Panama, Tony Burton, Chavez-Rosario, Gervacio-Espinoza, Vaca-Honeyghan.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Aug. 1988: Julio Cesar Chavez: The Kid From Culiacan. Plus: Holyfield, bad decisions, Lockridge-Knight, Starling-Breland II, Brown-Trice, Haugen-Santana.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Jan. 1990: Boxing's Bible Reborn At Age 68. Plus: Carlos Monzon, Mike Tyson, Leonard-Duran, Daniel Zaragoza, Nunn-Barkley, Whitaker-Ramirez, George Foreman (color).

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

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July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler-Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Oct. 1990: Rocky Graziano—Thanks For The Memories. Plus: Aaron Pryor, Junior Jones, Mike Tyson, Chris Eubank, Wolgast-Nelson, Hall of Fame.

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: Nigel Benn Plays By His Own Rules. Plus: Roberto Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, Jimmy Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

March 1991: Hunger! It Made Evander A Champ, But ... Plus: Dempsey-Firpo, Charles Murray, Khaosai Galaxy, Nunn-Curry, Henry Armstrong, Sonny Liston (color).

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

May 1991: All-Frazier I: 20 Years Late, Still The Fight Of The Century (color). Plus: fighting at home, Mark McPherson, George Costner, Rolando Pascua, Tony Canzoneri.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be...But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again-How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson's Fight For Greatness—Will November 8 Be His Moment? Plus: Edwin Rosario, Jeff Fenech, overrated/underrated, Giardello-Graham, Lennox Lewis, Marcel Cerdan, Leonard-Hearns I, heavyweight computer tournament, Ali portrait (color).

Dec. 1991: Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson: Who Will Win And Why. Plus: Eddie Aliano, Jack Britton, Muhammad Ali, Pernell Whitaker, rating the 44 world champions, Marcel Cerdan, Henry Cooper, Ezzard Charles-Jersey Joe Walcott (color).

Jan. 1992: Our Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Jerry Quarry, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mysterious Billy Smith, Joey Gamache, moving up in weight, Billy Conn-Michael Spinks, Joe Louis (color).

May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Rocky Graziano, Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Warring, Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

June 1992: What Now? Boxing Without Mike Tyson. Plus: Buck Smith, Liston-Foreman, Billy Graham, Holmes-Mercer, Enrique Pinder, Hilario Zapata, Toney-Tiberi, Benny Lynch, Tony DeMarco, Tyson centerfold (color).

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Oct. 1992: The Supreme Dream: The Heavyweight Hopes Of The Heavyweight Hopefuls. Plus: Kevin Kelley, All-Time Top 10: South Africa, Meldrick Taylor, Sharmba Mitchell, Bob Foster, Eder Jofre, Max Baer (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

March 1993: From Question Man To Answer Man: Riddick Bowe Leaves No Doubts. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Lopez-Gamache, Frank Bruno, Rocky Kansas, Frank Fletcher, Crisanto Espana, Bowe-Lewis (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1993: A Ring Exclusive: Julio Cesar Chavez Speaks Out. Plus: Bobby Czyz, 10 hardest punchers, Rafael Ruelas, Carmen Basilio, closing of the Fifth Street Gym, Sugar Ray Leonard (color).

Oct. 1993: Tommy Morrison: Good Enough To Beat Big George, But Will He Win The Heavyweight Title? Plus: Riddick Bowe, Mike Capriano, Billy Conn-Joe Louis, All-Time Top 10: Puerto Rico, Charles Murray.

April 1994: Michael Carbajal: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Brown-Norris, Kevin Kelley, Ceferino Garcia, Oscar De La Hoya, Tunney Hunsaker, Spinks-Foster.

May 1994 (92-Page Special) Division-By-Division: The Greatest Fighters Of All-Time. Plus: Virgil Hill & Orlando Canizales, Kostya Tszyu, James Toney, What If ... Dempsey vs. Wills.

June 1994: Moorer-Holyfield: Slugfest Or Stinker? Plus: Terry Norris, Paul Pender, Randall-Chavez I, Gonzales-Carbajal II, kickboxing.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Oct. 1994: Rating The Champs: Whitaker & Toney Lead The Field ... But Roy Jones Is Closing Fast. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Meldrick Taylor, Rafael Ruelas, Curtis Cokes.

Nov. 1994: With Lewis Fighting Bowe ... Is Michael Moorer's Career Off-Target? Plus: Wayne McCullough, Hall of Fame, Alejandro Lavorante, Rocky Marciano, Paz-Duran, Injuries (part I), What If ... Pedroza vs. Sanchez.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, Injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upsets Boxing's Balance Of Power. Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

June 1995: (92-Page Special): Foreman Frowns Upon The Age Gap: "I Don't Think Tyson Should Fight Anyone But Mu." Plus: Least deserving heavyweight challengers, Carlos Monzon, Kostya Tszyu.

May 1993

July 1995: Pernell Whitaker: *The Ring* Makes "Pound-For-Pound" An Official Title. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Ike Quartey, Benn-McClellan, TV prospects, Hector Acero-Sanchez, Harry Matthews, What If ... Robinson-Burley.

Aug. 1995: Can Tyson Go From Great To All-Time Great? Plus: Antonio Barrera, Collins-Eubanks, Johnny Paychek, McCall-Holmes.

Oct. 1995: (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

Nov. 1995: A 6-1 Favorite vs. Any Champion: Maybe They Should Just Give Tyson The Title. Plus: Roy Jones, Riddick Bowe, Ancee Gedeon, Hall of Fame, LaMar Clark, All-Time Top 10: Italy, What If ... Saad Muhammad-Scott.

Dec. 1995: McNeeley Goes Too Soon—Mike Tyson: The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Tommy Morrison, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, best chins.

Winter 1995 (92-Page Special): Buster Mathis Jr.: "Mike Tyson, You Got A Fight Comin' On." Plus: Holyfield-Bowe III preview, Wayne McCullough, Jesse James Hughes, Norris-Vaden preview, *The Ring* Insiders' Poll, What If ... Moore-Ayala Jr.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Also: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

April 1996: Oscar De La Hoya—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Mike Tyson, Gabe Ruelas, 1995 in review, All-Time Top 10: Africa.

May 1996: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Frankie Randall, Tim Witherspoon, Roy Jones, Bernard Hopkins.

June 1996 (92-Page Special): The Top 50 Fighters Of The Last 50 Years. Plus: Barrera-McKinney, Oscar De La Hoya, internet, Decade To Remember (1940s): Jimmy Bivins.

July 1996: Tyson! The Baddest ... But Is He The Best? Plus: De La Hoya-Chavez preview, Fabrice Tiozzo, Tommy Morrison & HIV, Malinga-Benn, closed-circuit, Chacon-Gomez.

Aug. 1996: A Closer Look At Tyson. Where He's At ... And Where He's Going. Plus: Joe Frazier, Roberto Duran, Buster Douglas, Arturo Gatti, women's boxing.

Sept. 1996: Lennox Lewis: Tough Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lewis-Mercer, Olympic team, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Johnson, Rocky, Scrapiron Johnson, heavyweight hopefuls.

Oct. 1996 (92-Page Special): A Lift For Boxing: Oscar's Timing Is Perfect! Plus: What's good and bad about boxing, Azumah Nelson, De La Hoya-Chavez, Charlie Powell.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

Dec. 1996: Our Spin On Roy Jones. Plus: heavyweight division, Olympic recap, Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rican fighters, Danny Hodge, Saad Muhammad.

Jan. 1997: Riddick Bowe's Promise. "This Time I'm Whipping Golota's Ass!" Plus: David Reid, Whitaker-Rivera II, meaningless records, Dick Tiger, Jess Willard.

March 1997 (92-Page Special): Mike Tyson. Can He Reclaim His Greatness? Plus: 10 greatest controversies, Teddy Atlas & Michael Moorer, Kostya Tszyu, George Chuvalo.

April 1997: Evander Holyfield—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Bowe-Golota II, Nigel Benn, David Reid, 1996 recap, Ray Actis, Joe Bugner.

May 1997: De La Hoya-Whitaker: Can "Sweet Pea" Stop Oscar's March To Greatness? Plus: Fitzsimmons-Corbett, Junior Jones, Phillip Holiday, Don King, Zaragoza-McCullough.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

July 1997: Leonard: There Wasn't Even A Ray Of Hope. Plus: Felix Trinidad, David Reid, Willie deWit & Shawn O'Sullivan, THE RING's 75th anniversary, Moore-Durelle I.

Sept. 1997 (92-Page Special): Who's The Best? The Experts Make Their Pound-For-Pound Choice. Plus: Terry Norris, Junior Jones, George Foreman, greatest punchers, Tapia-Romero preview, Mark Tessman, Doc Anderson.

Oct. 1997: Bang! Naseem Hamed Takes Aim At America. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Phillips-Tszyu, Saman Sorjaturong, Bobby Dykes.

Nov. 1997: Mike Tyson: Is He Finished? Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Ike Ibeabuchi, Hall of Fame weekend, mismatches.

Holiday 1997: Roy Jones: When He's Motivated, He's Unstoppable—Got That, Evander? Plus: Julio Cesar Green, Sugar Shane Mosley, boxers' day jobs, Tyson's mentor, Kid Lavigne.

Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone! Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.

Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

March 1998 (92-Page Special): Into The Millennium With The Real Deal: THE RING's Timeline For Evander Holyfield. Plus: Hernandez-Hernandez, Briggs-Foreman, 10 champs recall "The Day I Won The Title," Johnny Thompson.

April 1998: Evander Holyfield: THE RING's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

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THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended May 20, 1998

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

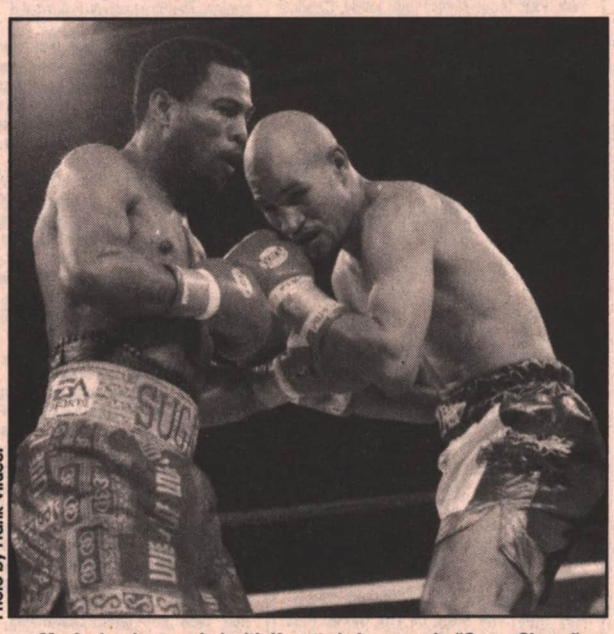


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Mosley's win, coupled with Nazarov's loss, made "Sugar Shane" the number-one lightweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *35-3 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *33-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **GEORGE FOREMAN** Marshall, TX *76-5*
4. **MICHAEL MOORER** Detroit, MI *39-2*
5. **RAY MERCER** West Orange, NJ *25-4-1*
6. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *27-0*
7. **SHANNON BRIGGS** New York, NY *31-2*
8. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *24-0*
9. **IKE IBEABUCHI** Dallas, TX *17-0*
10. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *29-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **FABRICE TIOZZO** France *39-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** Germany *22-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **IMAMU MAYFIELD** New Brunswick, NJ *18-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** Argentina *22-2-1*
5. **CARL THOMPSON** England *23-4*
6. **ROBERT DANIELS** Miami, FL *38-3-1*
7. **NATE MILLER** Philadelphia, PA *30-5*
8. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS** Las Vegas, NV *28-4-1*
9. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON** Lexington, KY *26-5-2*
10. **SAUL MONTANA** Mexico *31-6*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *36-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany *38-0*
3. **REGGIE JOHNSON** Houston, TX *37-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL *30-1*
5. **LOU DEL VALLE** Bronx, NY *27-1 (WBA Champ)*
6. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI** Germany *40-4-1 (WBC Interim Champ)*
7. **VIRGIL HILL** Bismarck, ND *43-3*
8. **WILLIAM GUTHRIE** Philadelphia, PA *24-1*
9. **MICHAEL NUNN** Davenport, IA *52-4*
10. **KEN BOWMAN** Chicago, IL *30-0*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **FRANKIE LILES** N. Hollywood, CA *32-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **CHARLES BREWER** Philadelphia, PA *31-5 (IBF Champ)*
3. **RICHIE WOODHALL** England *24-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JOE CALZAGHE** Wales *25-0*
5. **ROBIN REID** England *26-1-1*
6. **THOMAS TATE** Houston, TX *34-5*
7. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO** Italy *33-6*
8. **HEROL GRAHAM** England *48-6*
9. **ANDREI SCHKALIKOV** Russia *29-4-1*
10. **DEAN FRANCIS** England *20-1*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA *34-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. *25-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **HASSINE CHERIFI** France *25-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **OTIS GRANT** Canada *31-1-1*
5. **KEITH HOLMES** Washington, D.C. *30-2*
6. **ROBERT McCRACKEN** England *31-0*
7. **LONNIE BRADLEY** New York, NY *26-0-1*
8. **JULIO CESAR GREEN** Brooklyn, NY *22-3*
9. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** Davenport, IA *20-2-1*
10. **RYAN RHODES** England *16-1*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI** — France 36-2-1 (WBA Champ)
2. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** — Mexico 70-2 (IBF Champ)
3. **KEITH MULLINGS** — Brooklyn, NY 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **TERRY NORRIS** — Mission Valley, CA 47-7
5. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ** — Argentina 60-3
6. **WINKY WRIGHT** — St. Petersburg, FL 38-1
7. **RAUL MARQUEZ** — Houston, TX 28-1
8. **BRONCO McKART** — Monroe, MI 34-2
9. **TONY MARSHALL** — Albany, NY 28-7-6
10. **EMMETT LINTON** — Tacoma, WA 25-2

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** — Whittier, CA 27-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **PERNELL WHITAKER** — Norfolk, VA 41-2-1
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD** — Puerto Rico 33-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **IKE QUARTEY** — Ghana 34-0-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ** — Mexico 41-3-2
6. **OBA CARR** — Detroit, MI 45-2-1
7. **PATRICK CHARPENTIER** — France 27-4-1
8. **VERNON FORREST** — Atlanta, GA 24-0
9. **WILFREDO RIVERA** — Puerto Rico 27-3-1
10. **ANDREI PESTRIAEV** — Russia 21-2

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **VINCE PHILLIPS** — Las Vegas, NV 39-3 (IBF Champ)
2. **KHALID RAHILOU** — France 32-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ** — Mexico 99-2-2
4. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ** — Mexico 42-1-1
5. **KOSTYA TSZYU** — Australia 20-1-1
6. **RAFAEL RUELAS** — Studio City, CA 51-3
7. **HECTOR LOPEZ** — Palmdale, CA 38-6-1
8. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA** — Puerto Rico 46-5
9. **REGGIE GREEN** — Clinton, MD 27-2
10. **GIOVANNI PARISI** — Italy 36-2-1

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **SHANE MOSLEY** — Pomona, CA 27-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON** — Denver, CO 24-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **JEAN-BAPTISTE MENDY** — France 51-7-2 (WBA Champ)
4. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV** — Japan 26-1
5. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY** — South Africa 32-1
6. **ARTURO GATTI** — Jersey City, NJ 29-2
7. **ISRAEL CARDONA** — Hartford, CT 28-2
8. **AZUMAH NELSON** — Ghana 39-4-2
9. **ARTUR GRIGORIJAN** — Uzbekistan 24-0
10. **CESAR BAZAN** — Mexico 31-2-1

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **GENARO HERNANDEZ** — Los Angeles, CA 38-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY** — Gary, IN 23-2-1
3. **YONG SOO CHOI** — South Korea 24-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA** — Oxnard, CA 30-0 (IBF Champ)
5. **TRACY PATTERSON** — Highland, NY 60-5-1
6. **JESUS CHAVEZ** — Austin, TX 22-1
7. **GABE RUELAS** — Arleta, CA 44-4
8. **ANATOLY ALEXANDROV** — Kazakhstan 33-3
9. **JULIEN LORCY** — France 38-1-2
10. **ARNULFO CASTILLO** — Mexico 27-0-2

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED** — England 30-0
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA** — Philippines 42-7 (WBC Champ)
3. **FRED NORWOOD** — St. Louis, MO 29-0-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **MANUEL MEDINA** — Mexico 55-10 (IBF Champ)
5. **KEVIN KELLEY** — Flushing, NY 48-2-2
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** — Mexico 24-1
7. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ** — Hartford, CT 15-0
8. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ** — Puerto Rico 50-8-3
9. **HECTOR LIZARRAGA** — Fresno, CA 34-9-5
10. **DERRICK GAINER** — Pensacola, FL 22-4

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **VUYANI BUNGU** — South Africa 35-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **ERIK MORALES** — Mexico 30-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **KENNEDY McKINNEY** — Memphis, TN 33-3-1
4. **JUNIOR JONES** — Brooklyn, NY 44-3
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** — Mexico 44-2
6. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH** — Las Vegas, NV 22-1
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** — Mexico 24-0 (WBA Champ)
8. **MBULELO BOTILE** — South Africa 22-1
9. **RAFAEL DEL VALLE** — Puerto Rico 23-2-1
10. **HECTOR ACERO-SANCHEZ** — Brooklyn, NY 37-5-3

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** — Cincinnati, OH 18-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **NANA KONADU** — Ghana 38-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI** — Japan 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSUK** — Thailand 16-1
5. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** — Colombia 38-1
6. **PAULIE AYALA** — Ft. Worth, TX 24-0
7. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM** — Thailand 15-1
8. **DAORUNG C. SIRIWAT** — Thailand 61-6-3
9. **ADAN VARGAS** — Mexico 27-1-1
10. **DARIO AZUAGA** — Paraguay 41-0-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **JOHNNY TAPIA** — Albuquerque, NM 43-0-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **GERRY PENALOSA** — Philippines 39-1-2 (WBC Champ)
3. **SATOSHI IIDA** — Japan 24-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR** — Thailand 14-1-1
5. **HYUNG CHUL LEE** — South Korea 19-6
6. **HAROLD GREY** — Colombia 21-2
7. **LUIS BOLANO** — Colombia 23-0
8. **RATANACHAI DUTCHBOY GYM** — Thailand 25-3
9. **JULIO GAMBOA** — Nicaragua 21-2
10. **JOEL LUNA ZARATE** — Mexico 32-2-2

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON** — Washington, D.C. 34-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM** — Thailand 33-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **JOSE BONILLA** — Venezuela 24-3 (WBA Champ)
4. **CARLOS SALAZAR** — Argentina 47-7-3
5. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT** — Thailand 29-1
6. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL** — Mexico 36-3
7. **DAVID GUERAULT** — France 12-0
8. **CHOKVIWAT CHOKCHAI** — Thailand 30-3
9. **JESPER JENSEN** — Denmark 27-1
10. **ARTHUR JOHNSON** — East St. Louis, IL 17-4

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG** — Thailand 38-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **PHICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT** — Thailand 19-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **MAURICIO PASTRANA** — Colombia 18-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **BABY JAKE MATLALA** — South Africa 48-10-2
5. **JUAN CORDOBA** — Argentina 31-4-3
6. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO** — Mexico 51-5-4
7. **JOMA GAMBOA** — Philippines 23-3-1
8. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL** — Phoenix, AZ 45-4
9. **HI YONG CHOI** — South Korea 19-2
10. **TOMAS RIVERA** — Mexico 14-3-2

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** — Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES** — Light Heavyweight
3. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** — Heavyweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD** — Welterweight
5. **PERNELL WHITAKER** — Welterweight
6. **MARK JOHNSON** — Flyweight
7. **NASEEM HAMED** — Featherweight
8. **JOHNNY TAPIA** — Junior Bantamweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ** — Strawweight
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS** — Middleweight

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

THE FIGHTER

Courage isn't taking the big shot from three-point range with 1.9 seconds left on the clock. It's taking the big shot from Oscar De La Hoya 30 seconds into round one—and knowing that you may have to keep taking it for another 35½ minutes.

Class isn't a pitcher making $3-million a year facing the press after his fastball has been whacked around The Ballpark in Arlington. It's a "catcher" making $400 a fight opening his dressing room door to the scribes after his butt has been kicked around The Armory in Newark.

Even a badly battered Gatti cooperated with the media

And toughness isn't playing on a bum knee when the potential reward is a Super Bowl ring and a chance to tell America you're going to Disney World. It's shrugging off two gashed eyebrows when the only prize is a future shot at a USBA title, and you know you're only going to the emergency room.

As if you didn't know, The Fighter was, is, and always will be my guy. If there is a finer athlete in the wide world of sports, he has yet to show himself. Am I biased? You bet, and darned proud of it.

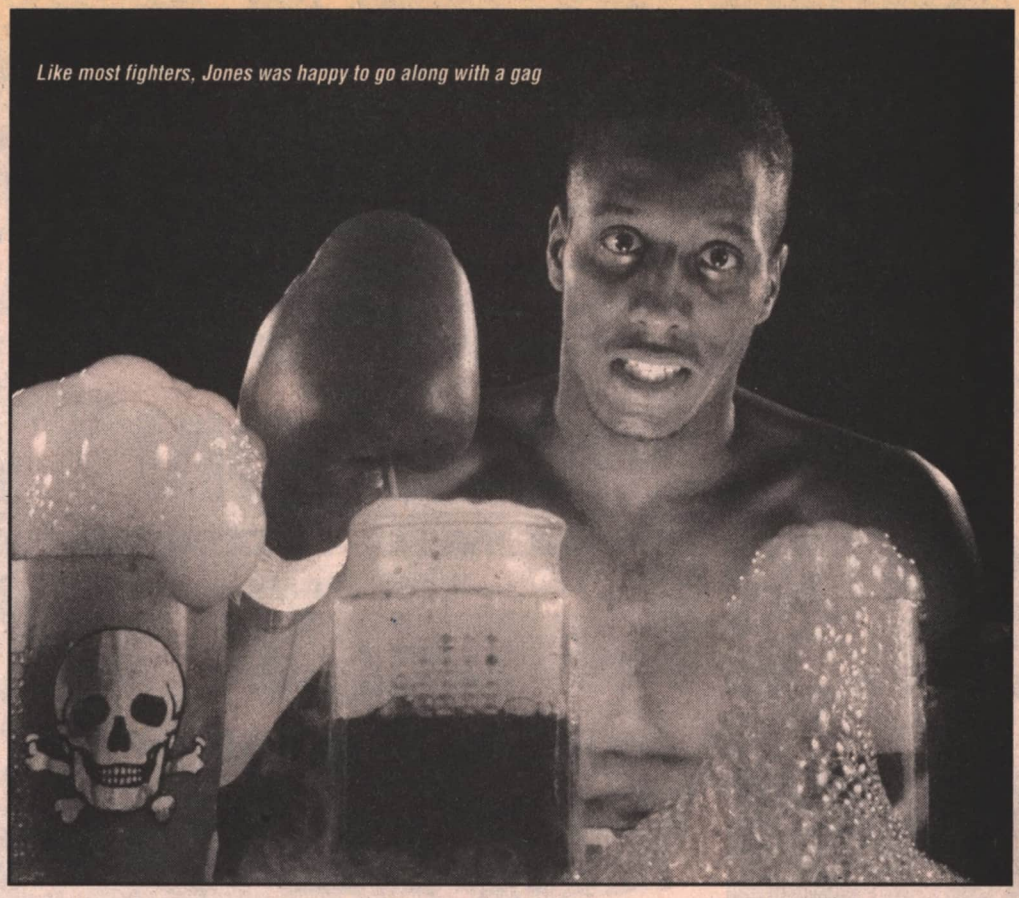
That's the effect fighters can have on you. Spend time watching them working and playing and celebrating and hurting, talk to them about where they're from and where they hope to go, listen to their boasts and excuses, bust their chops and endure them busting yours, and before long they sneak into your heart like stowaways on a cargo ship. And after you hang around the spoiled, arrogant, surly, condescending multimillionaires who take up too high of a percentage of locker space in the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball, you learn to appreciate The Fighter even more.

Ten years ago, I would have thought expanding my sports coverage—not confining myself to the frequently gridlocked boxing beat—would give me a greater appreciation for athletes in other sports. Well, it has opened my eyes all right, but too often to show me things I would have preferred not to see. Still, friends who ask me which pro athletes are the best people to be around are astounded when I tell them fighters. They think I'm kidding. You can even see them start to smirk as they wait for a punchline.

They don't believe me because a lot of folks who don't follow the fight business closely can't differentiate between boxing and boxers. Yes, boxing is a cesspool. But boxers are the reason we're willing to hold our noses and keep wading through it. When I watch Arturo Gatti escape doom with a left hook that could dent a ringpost, or see Roy Jones unveil some-

thing different (like the right to Virgil Hill's ribs), or talk to the 300 pounds of nice guy they call Butterbean, or hit the open highway with George Foreman, or have Mike Tyson give me the finger as a bizarre sign of respect, I'm reminded why, even after retirement calls one day, I'll never ignore that unique breed that punches for pay.

The smirkers can keep paying $150 to $200 for an autograph of Ted Williams or Joe D. If you've ever journeyed to an induction weekend in Canastota, you know that you can fill a notebook with legendary names and the cost is nothing more than addressing Jose Napoles as "Champ" or telling Archie Moore that he doesn't look a day over 60.



Like most fighters, Jones was happy to go along with a gag

Watching Naseem Hamed caked in makeup and pretending to be an old man for the lead-in to one of his HBO fights, I remembered the time THE RING staff got Vinny Pazienza to pose for photos wearing a devil's horns and tail, and once had Junior Jones stirring beakers of bubbling "poison" that, had it spilled on him, would have permanently dyed the junior featherweight's clothes the color of beets. If only Dan Marino was half as cooperative when one of my editors once had the temerity to ask him to pose in—talk about ridiculous demands—his Miami Dolphins jersey.

Every year, I run into more jerks in the "major sports" than I've encountered in all 14 of my years in boxing. Patrick Ewing bitched because I was sitting on a chair in front of his locker even though I had removed my second-rate butt from it long before he approached. (Do you know how many times in boxing dressing rooms an entourage member has *found* me a seat?) Wayne Gretzky snuck out the back door of the New York Rangers practice facility even though he was told I was waiting for him to conduct an interview he had agreed to do. Warren Sapp blew me off. Andre Agassi wouldn't cooperate. Attempts at gaining even minimal access to many of these bozos often involves incredible arm-twisting.

Contrast that with the access boxers provide. Many a guy gets knocked colder than the undercarriage of a Zamboni, and he's quite willing to relive the gory details moments afterward. Fighters' homes may be their castles, but you won't find moats around them. Only welcome mats. Heck, *ESPN Magazine* photographed Tommy Morrison and his wife in bed!

After the uninitiated are convinced by me that The Fighter is the sports world's good guy and its most cooperative story subject, they inevitably start asking why that's the case. Their assumption is that it relates to his often impoverished upbringing or his having never gotten used to being coddled the way baseball, basketball, and football players have been since they were pee-wees.

I don't buy it. I've met lots of athletes in other sports who grew up poor, and that hasn't made them the least bit grateful for, or humble about, what they have achieved. And some of the most cooperative fighters in the game—Pazienza, Morrison, Terry Norris—were fawned-over high school stars in sports other than boxing. Such attention didn't turn *them* into anti-social idiots.

Fighters are just a different animal, pure and simple. They—not their managers, promoters, or TV networks—are an example of what's right about sports. For every "No Mas," Buster Douglas flop, or Tyson earbite, there are hundreds of fighters who wouldn't know how to quit if you held a gun to their temples and ordered them to do so. They all fight on too long, and it's sad. But even then, there is something strangely noble about not knowing how to do anything else in life but show heart and guts and put yourself on the line. It has long been said that The Fighter stands alone. Yeah, in more ways than one.

There is another group of athletes whose actions not just on the field of battle, but especially in the locker room, has earned my respect and admiration. I'm talking about hockey players. (The Grate Gretzky notwithstanding.) Apparently, sports that leave guys in stitches and make their dentists cringe are great character-builders. In some ways, guys in the NHL remind me a lot of fighters.

They can take that as one hell of a compliment. ■

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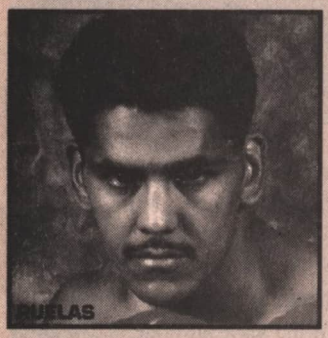
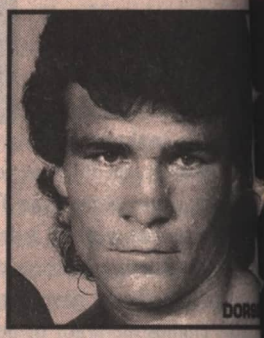


GABRIEL
RUELAS

VERSUS

TROY
DORSEY



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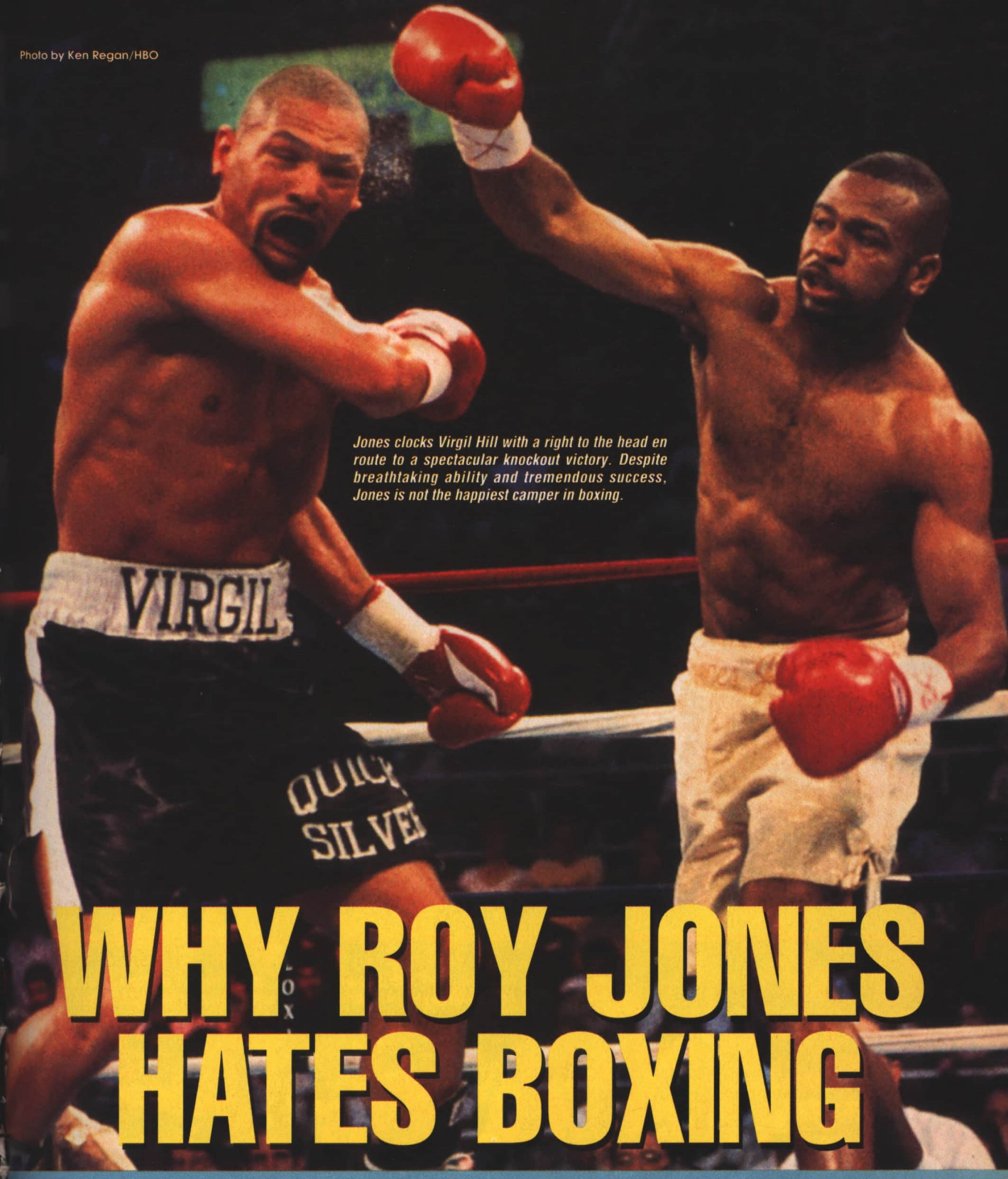


Photo by Ken Regan/HBO

Jones clocks Virgil Hill with a right to the head en route to a spectacular knockout victory. Despite breathtaking ability and tremendous success, Jones is not the happiest camper in boxing.

WHY ROY JONES HATES BOXING

By **Ron Borges**

Roy Jones, perhaps boxing's best pound-for-pound fighter, wants you to understand one thing about his business: He hates it. Jones wants you to understand one more thing about his business: People get hurt in it. In fact, most people get hurt in it, which leads Jones to remind you one more time of what he thinks about his business. Did he mention he hates it? Other than that, Jones couldn't be happier these days, because for a guy who doesn't like to fight, he sure does an awful lot of damage when he does.

"I don't miss this at all," said the fighter many experts contend is the best in the world today and may yet become one of the best ever to lace on gloves. His voice was filled with incredulity as he spoke barely 45 minutes after knocking out Virgil Hill with one bodyshot in the fourth round of their April 25 fight at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi. The

end had come just 10 minutes, 11 seconds into the fight, meaning Jones has boxed a grand total of barely 12 minutes in the past 13 months, having disposed of Montell Griffin in less than one round last August in his last sortie into the dark world of prize fighting that he clearly finds so distasteful.

Considering that, one questioner, who had just marveled at the speed of hand and foot Jones had shown against a fighter who was 22-2 in world title fights, asked if perhaps he'd regretted not having had more time to display what is surely his art on canvas. When the question landed, Jones, 36-1 (31), reacted the way he does to a big right hand headed his way. His eyes grew wide, his body tensed, he steeled himself for combat. Just the thought of it seemed to make Jones ill at ease.

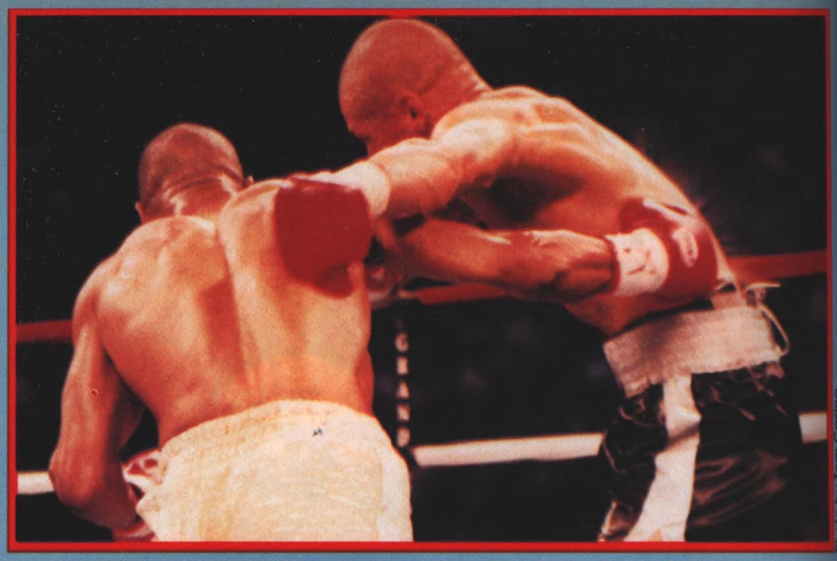


Photo by Tom Casino

Jones delivers a crushing right to Hill's ribs for a rare, one-punch, bodyshot knockout, ending the two-time former champion's bid to become a three-time champ 1:10 into the fourth round.

"My mother and my family don't like to see me punched at," Jones explained. "They know I'm a bully, but they don't like to see it. This game is not a good game for any of us. Fighters. Writers. Any of us. You've seen the way most fighters end up. This game don't usually deal you a good hand. I don't miss going out there and putting my life on the line, and that's pretty much what we're doing."

Certainly, that was probably true for poor Hill, the 34-year-old, two-time light heavyweight champion who had successfully defended those titles 20 times before losing to Dariusz Michalczewski last June. Hill grew so troubled by the counter right hands Jones was rapidly throwing over his jab that he forgot about protecting his body. Then, early in round four, Jones drove a right into his left side that fractured Hill's ninth and 10th ribs and left him in a ball on the floor, his face grimacing.

Although Hill would struggle up at the count of eight, he never stood upright again until well after referee Fred Steinwinder III had counted him out on his feet. Under normal circumstances that might have led to some sort of muted protest from Hill or his cornermen, but no such words were uttered because it's difficult to argue for your fighter when he is doubled over on his stool, wearing a pained expression. It is difficult to do anything except what Hill did next, which was go to a local hospital for some repair work.

"He hits pretty hard," Hill grunted as he walked out of the ring, his proud head bowed.

Indeed Jones does, but he does it reluctantly. Up until the final day or so before a match, Jones seems to have nothing but complaints. Complaints about what he is being asked to do for a living. Complaints about what he's being paid. Complaints about what his opponent is being paid to do. Complaints about how he is risking his life and how no one seems to understand it. Complaints about having to appear at press conferences or for television interviews when he gets no pleasure from them.

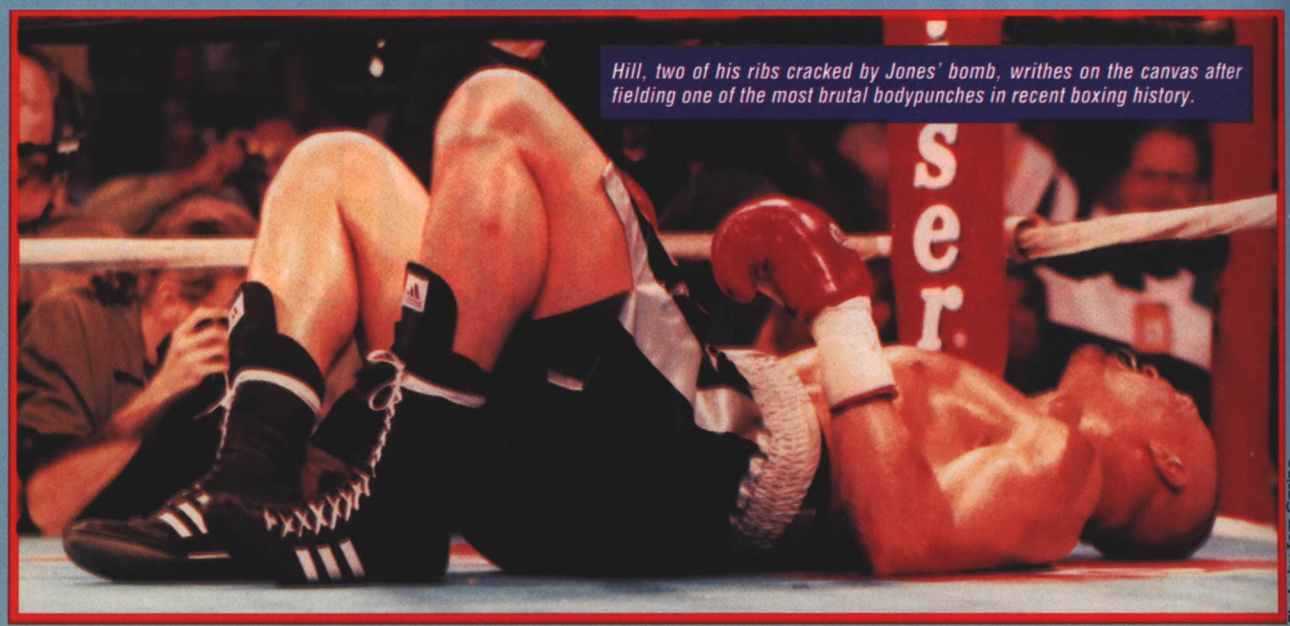


Photo by Tom Casino

Hill, two of his ribs cracked by Jones' bomb, writhes on the canvas after fielding one of the most brutal bodypunches in recent boxing history.

Photo by Tom Casino

WBC light heavyweight king Jones still has a grim look on his face as referee Fred Steinwinder III and promoter Murad Muhammad raise his arms in victory following the Hill fight.

Next up for Jones could be highly regarded and undefeated Dariusz Michalczewski, who was on hand in Biloxi, Mississippi, to watch Jones destroy Hill.

Photo by Tom Casino

Complaints about his opponent's unworthiness to be in the same ring with him. Complaints about everything, even though he usually prefaces them by saying, "I'm not complaining but ... "

Whether those complaints and irritations mirror his true feelings or merely his unsettledness at the prospect of having to risk life and mind to fight for his food, people tire quickly of hearing them. (Still, it is impossible to dispute what Jones says about the dangers of his profession.) His opponents tire of it. HBO executives who have paid him millions tire of it. Even his fans tire of it, although they seem to accept it as part of who Jones is. But who is he, exactly?

According to trainer Emanuel Steward, "Roy has become his father." If so, that's a problem since father and son split years ago because of the controlling nature of the older man. Now Jones seems to have adopted many of Roy Senior's less-flattering qualities.

In the final week before the Hill fight, for example, Jones protested over what gloves would be used, ripped HBO's executives in a taped interview over their alleged lack of respect for him, and protested the time of the weigh-in. He wanted it held the day of the fight, rather than the day before as the contract stipulated because "I'm no light heavyweight. I'm not a big guy. I give these guys the [size] advantage every time I fight."

Were the gloves and weigh-in time safety issues with Jones or control issues? That's difficult to know, but there's no question that they were issues that quickly seemed meaningless once the fight began.

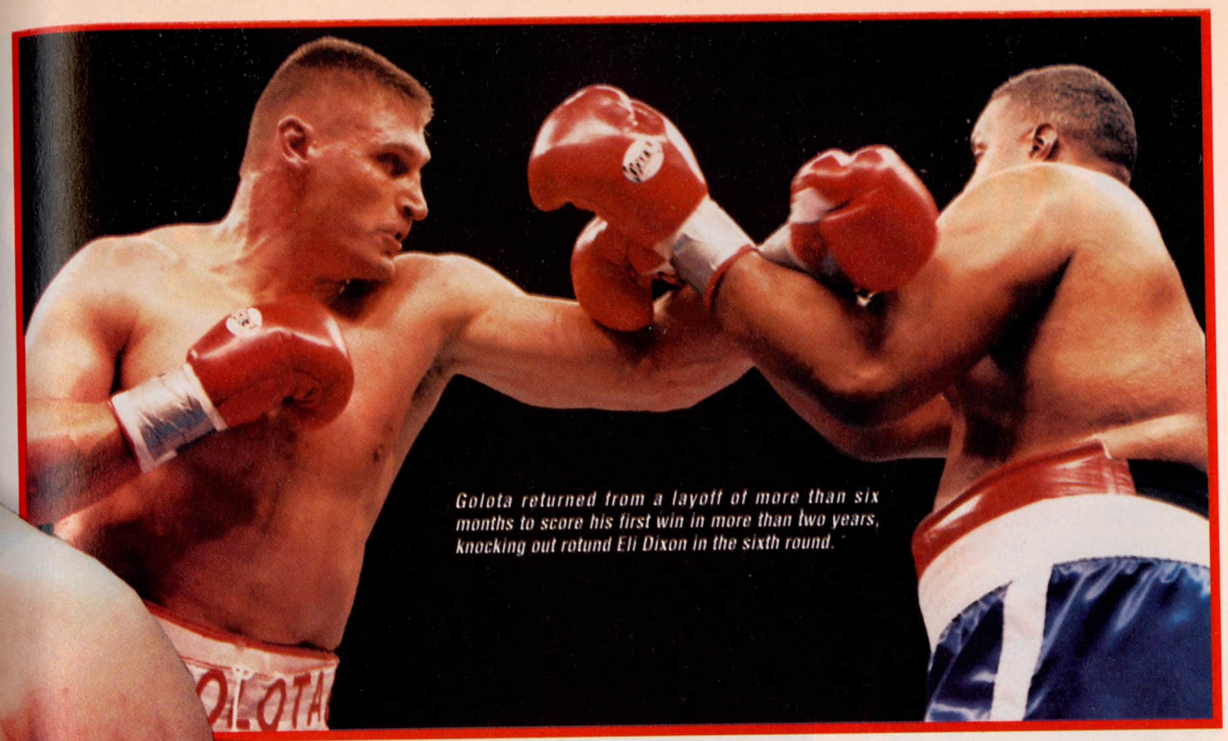
What difference, observers wondered, did it make if Hill was using three gloves or weighed in a week ago? To Jones, such questions merely show an ignorance of the danger he faces in the ring. That seemed to be his thinking when he turned down a fight with heavyweight Buster Douglas earlier this year after both his promoter, Murad Muhammad, and Douglas', Bob Arum, believed they had an agreement. Jones' change of mind came after he spoke about the fight with his father, someone he admits he had not consulted on any subject for several years.

Jones' father told him the risk was not worth the reward because there was no

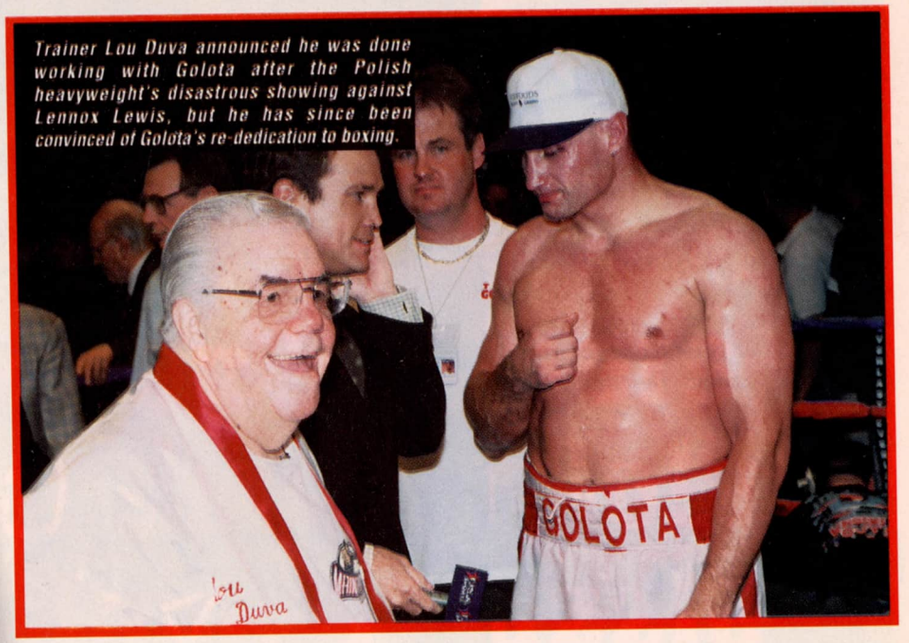
(Continued on page 67)

GOLOTA KEEPS HIS COOL... AND GETS FIRST WIN IN TWO YEARS!

Photos by Marty Rosengarten



Golota returned from a layoff of more than six months to score his first win in more than two years, knocking out rotund Eli Dixon in the sixth round.



Trainer Lou Duva announced he was done working with Golota after the Polish heavyweight's disastrous showing against Lennox Lewis, but he has since been convinced of Golota's re-dedication to boxing.

By D.E. Thomas

The brawny, broad-shouldered heavyweight, all 6'4" and 240 pounds of him, stepped out of the ring and made his way through a wildly celebrating throng of supporters who had traveled to Ledyard, Connecticut, to witness his first fight in five months, finally making his way to the dressing room with his smiling managers and trainers.

Andrew Golota had struggled mightily with his own demons before the mid-April fight with trialhorse Eli Dixon. Twin disqualifications in his showdowns with Riddick Bowe still scarred his psyche, and now he had the additional baggage of making his first in-ring appearance since a humiliating opening-round knockout at the heavy hands of WBC heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis to add to his burden.

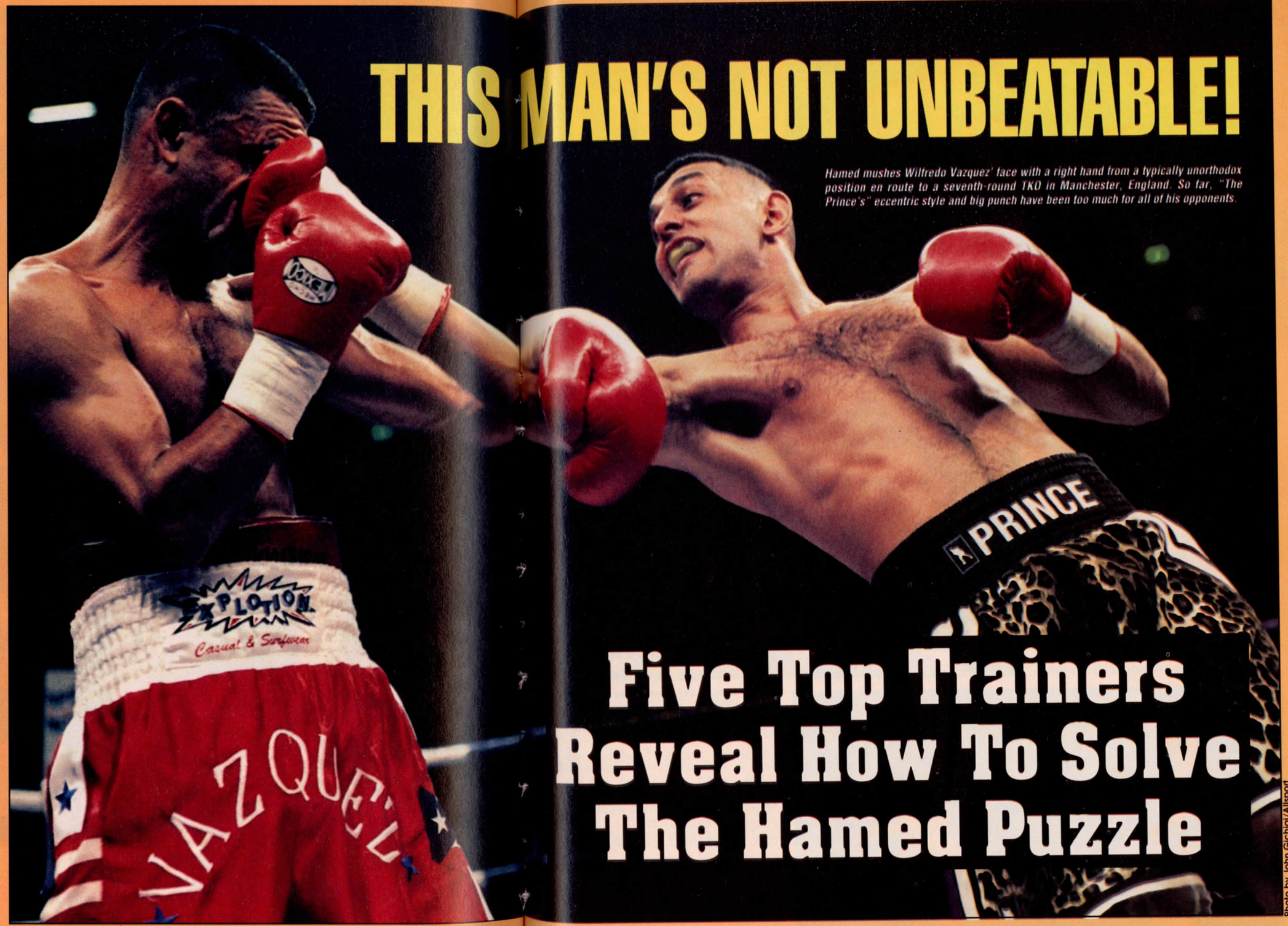
Taking out Dixon with a single bodyshot in the sixth round may not vault him back to the top of the world rankings, but Golota was willing to take what he could get. Believe it or not, it was his first victory in more than two years, since his stoppage of Danell Nicholson marked him as a heavyweight to watch.

"I'm glad I got through with this," the Chicago-based native of Poland told his braintrust. "Now I know I want to fight. I want to go back to the gym and listen to you guys. I want to be champion."

Yes, Golota is back, if a routine 10-rounder against a blubbery 293-pound opponent counts for anything. It's a long way from where Golota might have been if things had gone differently last October, when he froze with powerpuncher Lewis bearing down on him. Instead of pocketing

(Continued on page 68)

THIS MAN'S NOT UNBEATABLE!



Hamed mushes Wilfredo Vazquez' face with a right hand from a typically unorthodox position en route to a seventh-round TKO in Manchester, England. So far, "The Prince's" eccentric style and big punch have been too much for all of his opponents.

Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle

Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

By Tim Graham

Everybody wants a piece of the action, but nobody seems to know what to do with it. Ask any fighter remotely close to 126 pounds whom he wants to fight, and he assuredly will name Naseem Hamed. Ask that same fighter how he would become the first to beat the swaggering "Prince" and he almost certainly will struggle to find an answer.

Or will he?

It likely depends on who this challenger has in his corner. THE RING asked five prominent trainers how they would beat the slippery-quick powerpuncher. To assure an unbiased assessment, we used only trainers that do not currently handle a potential Hamed opponent.

While there were many common threads involved their strategies, each trainer offered a distinct style they claimed would stop Hamed, 30-0 (28). The bombastic Richie Giachetti didn't disappoint with his proposal of taking the fight to Hamed in an aggressive attempt to strip him of his confidence. Eddie Mustafa Muhammad offered a 180-degree approach by stating it was impossible to take away Hamed's pride. With that in mind, Eddie Mustafa would base his plan on heavy counterpunching. Teddy Atlas would be patient, too, but with some trickery mixed in. Emanuel Steward would treat him like an ordinary fighter because he claims Hamed possesses just as many flaws as he does talents. Then there's Lou Duva, who believes a fighter needs to throw multiple styles at Hamed.

It appears there is no shortage of possible ways to beat Hamed. If these methods are worthy, then maybe instead of figuring out how to beat him, the boxing world should be figuring out why it hasn't happened yet.

TEDDY ATLAS

I would start by saying that the Wilfredo Vazquez fight was misleading. I think Hamed will always look like a solid boxer against a slow, plodding veteran. Vazquez is a good fighter, but his prime is past him. He's very methodical. I think that he was a perfect foil, especially coming off the Kevin Kelley fight, for a guy like Hamed. Hamed's unorthodox and quick and has a decent sense of anticipation. His quickness was too much for a cement-footed Vazquez.

I know what Hamed's strengths and weaknesses are. His selection of Vazquez as an opponent played to his strengths, and it was misleading how good he looked. Vazquez cooperated very well. The Prince had a lot of advantages: One was age, one was speed, and one was style.

Breaking down and analyzing and coming up with a fight plan to beat Hamed is understanding his strengths and weaknesses. His big strength is his power. He's a born puncher. I've always said that punchers are born, not made. He can punch off the wrong foot, not set, and still knock a guy down. He's unorthodox and has good hand speed. He's young and confident, and that helps in his delivery. He likes to, when he can, counterpunch. But he's undisciplined with his defensive habits. He drops his hands. He'll pull back.

A lot of times when you break a guy down, he's not what he appears to be. Your mind was fooled into thinking he does something a lot more than he really does. But looking at it in a very detached, sober way, there is a predictable pattern to his punches. He either counterpunches or jumps in. His weaknesses are he can leave himself vulnerable, he can be undisciplined with hand placement, and he misjudges distance like he did in the Kelley fight. He was stepping straight back with his hands down, and Kelley could catch

Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

Have aging fighters like 37-year-old Vazquez made Hamed look better than he really is? Top trainer Teddy Atlas thinks so.

him on the way out because Hamed was still in the catching range. Against Vazquez, he made sure he was out of punching range, out of the danger zone. And then when Vazquez stepped in, Hamed was ready to punch.

I would have my guy, considering that Hamed's a potent puncher, pumped up with defense. I wouldn't have him walk straight in. I would have him feint, try to get him to think my guy is coming when he's not coming. With that first volley out of the way, I'd have my guy walk in and throw punches off the jab. At that point one of two things would happen: One, Hamed would be off-balance—having missed the counterpunch—and my guy could unload at that point; or two, I'd have my guy put something together because you may miss the first punch, and the great benefit of a combination is that the second punch can really catch the guy.

I would concentrate my fight plan on changing things. Hamed loves to counterpunch, so I'd have my guy work on changing angles, make Hamed believe he's coming through the front door, but come through the side door. And don't punch and step to find him; step and then find him when you have him going back.

Two things the feint will do: One is to

Photo by Anthony Neste/HBO

All the experts were unanimous in saying that the worst thing you can do against Hamed is lunge at him, giving him a perfect opportunity to land a powerful counter.

One of the biggest problems opponents face is Naz' uncanny punching power. He hit Vazquez so hard, both of the veteran's feet left the canvas before he crashed down on the seat of his trunks.

Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

draw the lead, and the other thing would be get Hamed to make a defensive move. He'd only be doing one or the other. If he reacted defensively and he was pulling back, you're still in good punching position to catch him going back.

It's important to put offensive opportunities together and not just throw one punch. When you put the second, third, fourth punches together, you're going to run him into punches. I also would have my guy, when he does have Hamed stepping back, catch him a lot of times pulling back. Kind of like leading a receiver in football: Don't throw it where he is, throw it where he's going to be.

(Continued on page 69)

THE 12 GREATEST FINISHES OF ALL-TIME

By William Dettloff

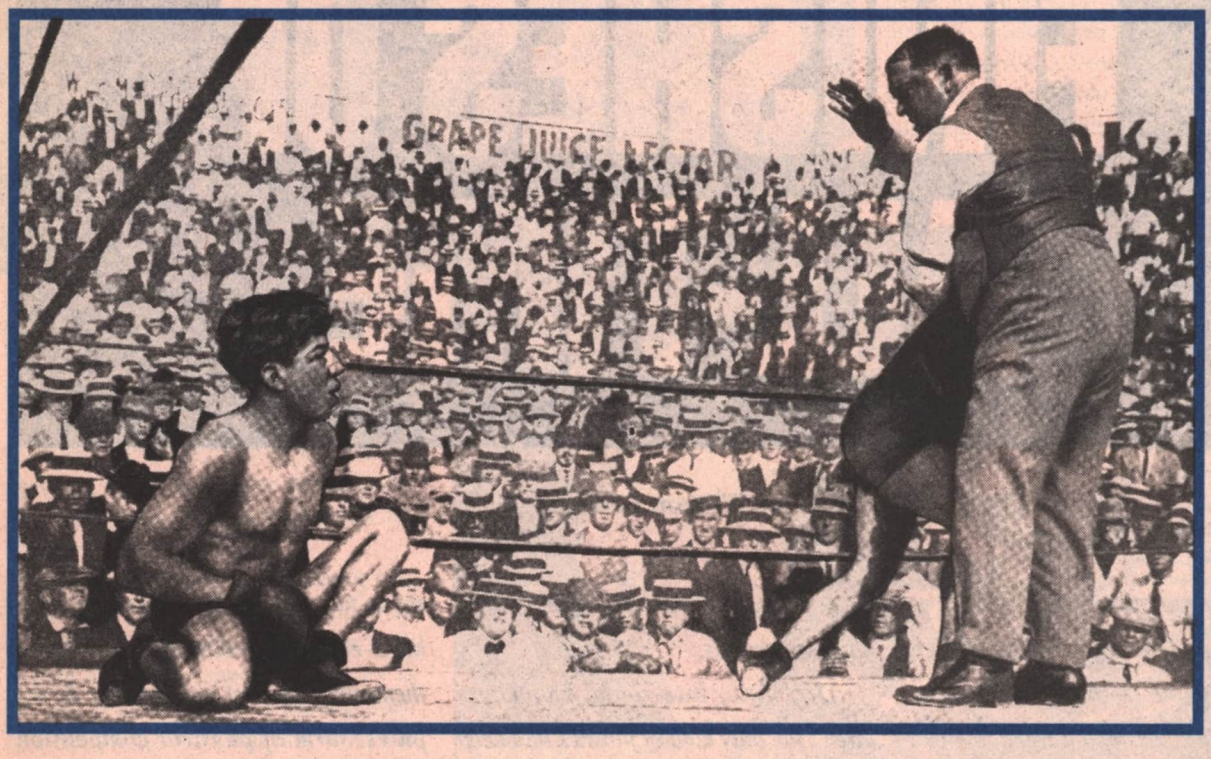
One of the things that is so endearing about the fight game is the opportunity it provides for classic, unforgettable endings. In boxing, it never is truly over until it's over, regardless of what it says on the scorecards, or how much time is left on the clock. The same cannot be said for all sports. Comeback maven that he is, John Elway could never heave a touchdown pass far enough to overcome a 21-point deficit. There is not a spot on any basketball court from which one could sink a bucket worth, say, 10 points. And the maximum number of runs anyone can drive in with one swing of a Louisville Slugger is four. That doesn't do much good if you're down by nine. But a fighter who has lost every single round has a chance of winning, right up until the last seconds.

Dramatic, late-round knockouts aren't the only kind of finishes that keep us coming back for more. Professional prize fighting is too full of misfits, hidden agendas, and politics to give us fair, decisive endings each time out. (Like we have to tell you that.) There are too many variables involved, too many tales built around money, power, and greed. There's a lot to be made and a lot to be lost, and the game's structure—or lack thereof—leaves it ripe for those so inclined to use their power to influence a bout's outcome one way or another. But isn't half the fun knowing when—and why—a fighter is getting shafted?

Most times though, the endings you see in the ring are honest and real, the hard-earned results of men pitting themselves against one another in the purest form of physical competition there is. In a sport as old as this and as steeped in character as this, there have been countless finishes that deserve our attention and our respect. In this feature, THE RING pays tribute to The 12 Greatest Finishes ever. Note that we're applying the term "greatest" broadly; while you will read about several of the classic, come-from-behind endings that have provided us with some of the greatest moments in the sport's rich history, our selections also include bouts that ended under highly controversial, objectionable, or questionable circumstances. Did we get it right? We'll let you be the judge.

AD WOLGAST KO 13 MEXICAN JOE RIVERS

July 4, 1912



Welsh counts out Rivers while holding up Wolgast

When is a low blow not a low blow? When is a knockdown not really a knockdown? And do two hooks equal a right? The thousands of fans who attended the Wolgast-Rivers lightweight title bout probably went home asking themselves these very questions, and they never did get an answer.

For 12 rounds, Wolgast and Rivers pounded away at one another, with neither fighter giving quarter. They traded rounds back and forth, with Wolgast pounding the body and Rivers ripping hooks and right hands over the top. The brawl was virtually even entering the 13th round, and as it drew to a close, the two came together near the ropes. Wolgast, a notoriously dirty fighter who would eventually lose the title to Willie Ritchie by disqualification, nailed Rivers with a blow that landed well below the belt. The fans knew it was low, and Wolgast did, too. So did Rivers, who immediately went down.

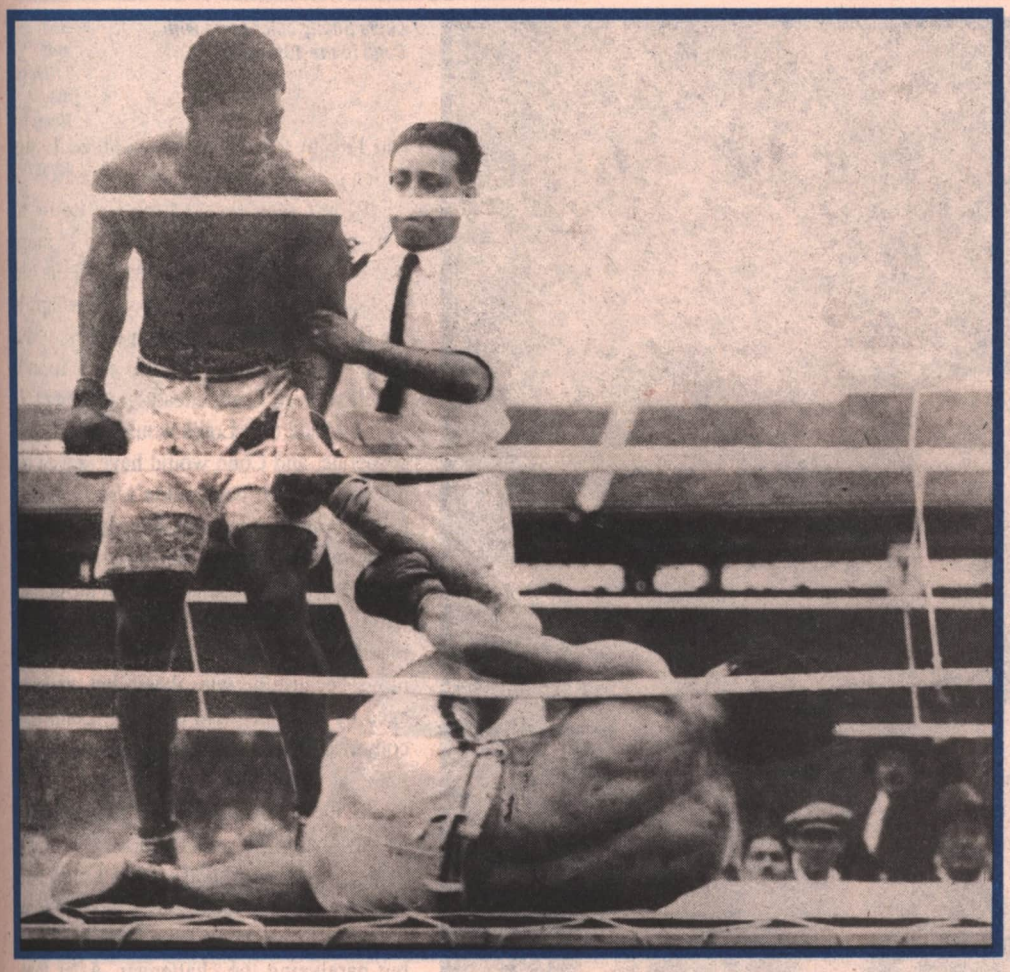
On any other day, perhaps against any other opponent, that would have brought on an unsatisfying but not wholly uncommon end to what had been a highly entertaining bout. But this wasn't any other day, and the tough-as-nails Rivers wasn't just any fighter. For at the precise moment that Wolgast landed his haymaker to the groin, Rivers landed a booming hook of his own to the point of the champion's chin. And just as Rivers had, Wolgast went down hard. A double-knockdown.

We've all seen *Rocky II* enough times to know what happens when a double-knockdown occurs: The referee administers the count, just like he normally would, and the fighters have to rise—unassisted, of course—within the count of 10. The one who cannot rise in time loses. Apparently, referee Jack Welsh had his own ideas. With hundreds in the crowd screaming that Rivers had been fouled, the official began counting over the two fighters. When he got to four, he reached down with his left hand and, incredibly, helped Wolgast to his feet while still counting over Rivers with his right until the bell sounded. The fighters went to their respective corners, and Welsh, who would later claim that he never heard the bell, strode calmly to Wolgast's corner, raised him arm, and declared him the winner.

Was Welsh acting on Wolgast's behalf in some underhanded plot to help him retain the crown? Such shenanigans were common during that time. Or maybe Welsh knew that one of the fighters landed a low blow, but he didn't know which. Panicking and taking what he figured would be the more conservative route, he decided Rivers was the offender and assisted Wolgast accordingly. We'll never know for sure. Either way, you'd be hard-pressed to find a more bizarre ending in ring history. And for that we are thankful.

BATTLING SIKI KO 6 GEORGES CARPENTIER

September 24, 1922



Siki sends French hero Carpentier to the canvas

Outside of having been destroyed by Jack Dempsey in 1921, Carpentier pretty much had things the way he wanted them. Going into his bout with Siki, he was still the light heavyweight king, still a matinee idol, and still a heck of a fighter. That wasn't enough, though, at least for his managers. They wanted to play it safe and make big money at the same time, and before the bout with Siki was signed, a deal was struck to have the challenger take a dive.

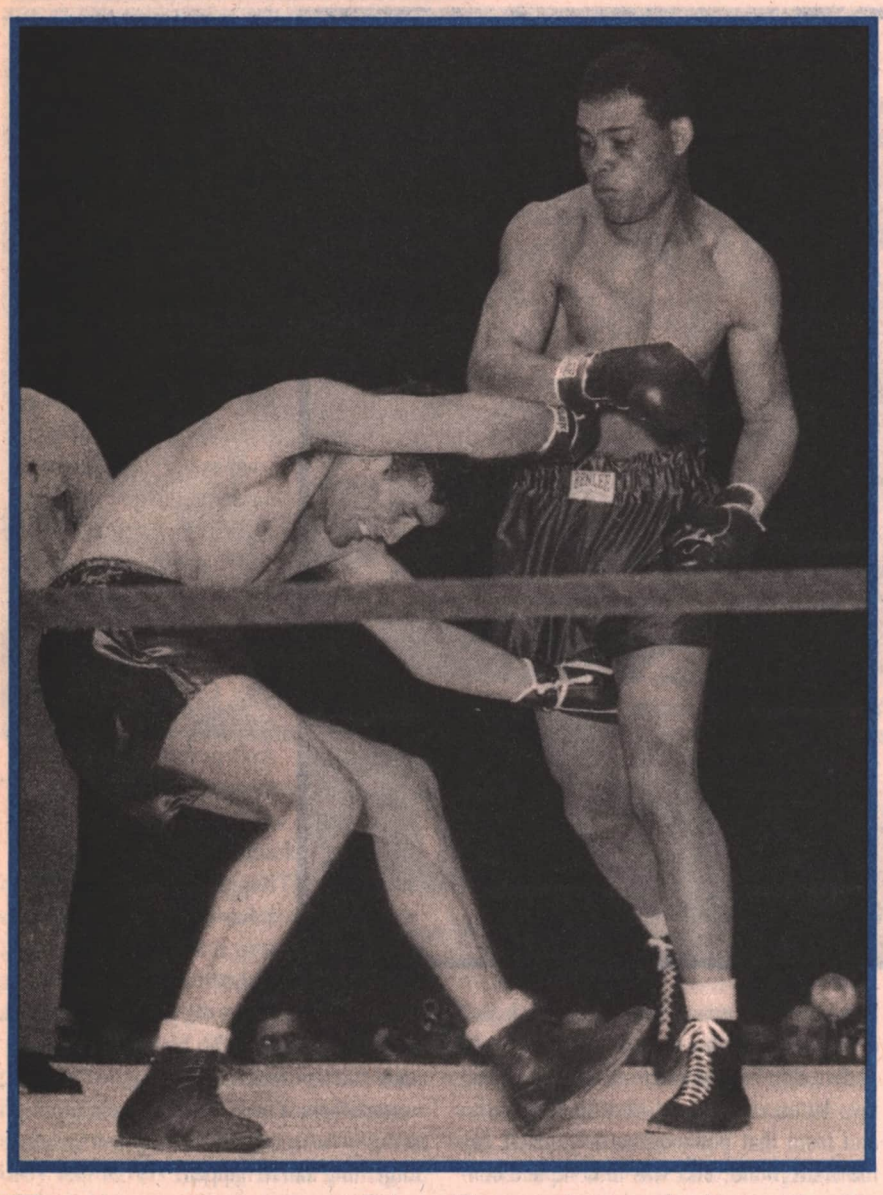
At first, Siki played along with the game, pulling his punches and letting Carpentier get the better of him. But he was a proud man and after Carpentier banged him around in the third and dropped him with a right, all bets were off. A dive Siki had agreed to; a beating he had not. Upon rising, he tore into Carpentier and from that point on he dominated. By the sixth round, Siki was in complete control and he blasted Carpentier around the ring, rendering the handsome Frenchman a bloody, lumpy mess. The finish came in the same round when he trapped Carpentier against the ropes and bludgeoned him, finally knocking him halfway through the ropes. Siki wins, end of story, right? Wrong.

Instead of counting the battered Carpentier out, referee Henri Bernstein, who was in on the fix, disqualified Siki for tripping. And if you think the crowd reaction to unjust outcomes is extreme today, forget it. They're downright tame compared to what the 50,000 fans who packed the Velodrome Buffalo in Paris did. They didn't need instant replay to see that Siki had done nothing to justify a disqualification, other than to give Carpentier a good, old-fashioned butt-kicking. And despite the fact that they were there in support of the champion, they were outraged at the obviously bogus ruling. Thousands refused to leave the stadium. A bold few actually rushed the ring and spat at Bernstein. This was 40 years before the age when a fighter who had been wronged could file a protest, or complain to the state commission. There were no sanctioning bodies, no local boxing government. Something had to happen.

After a period spent unsuccessfully trying to calm things and clear the crowd out, the event's officials huddled to decide on a strategy. Their options were limited; the fans knew what they saw. And being as outnumbered as they were—50,000 to say, six—they made the only ruling they could: Siki by knockout at 1:10 of the sixth round. For once, fight fans had a role in righting an obvious wrong. Imagine that.

JOE LOUIS KO 13 BILLY CONN

June 18, 1941



Louis finally catches up with Conn in the 13th round

Louis was not one to panic. Going into his bout with Conn, he saw no reason to start. Why would he? No light heavyweight champion had ever captured the heavyweight crown, although many had tried. There was no reason to suspect that Conn would turn the trick against Louis. "The Brown Bomber" had already defended the title 14 times against the best big men the world had to offer and Conn wasn't expected to last past the early rounds.

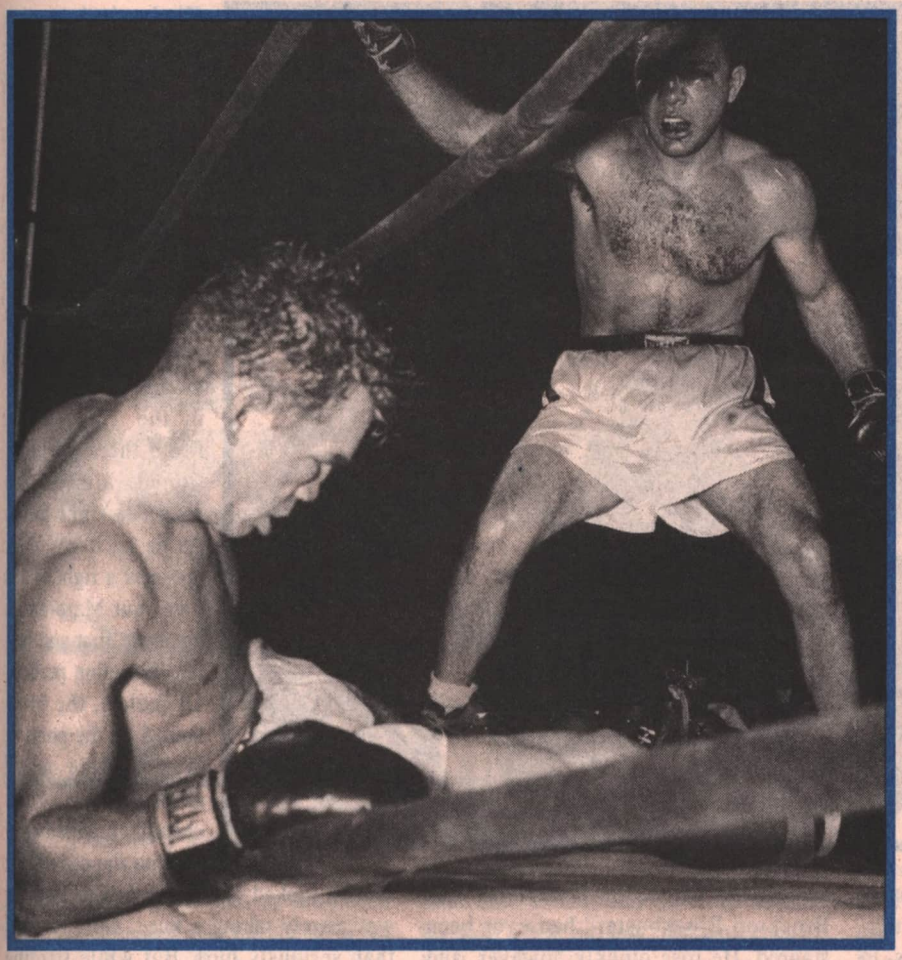
Almost from the start, however, Conn's speed and elusiveness gave the champion trouble. Never the fleetest of foot, Louis found himself hard-pressed to keep up with the challenger, who boxed and moved with confidence. Growing ever bolder as he put one round after another in the bank, the challenger landed at will in the 12th, and late in the round he wobbled Louis with a pair of hooks.

If there was ever a time for Louis to start panicking, this was it. And if there was ever a time for Conn to stick to the old stick-and-move, this was also it. Perhaps if the fighters could have taken a peek at the judges' scorecards after the 12th round, which showed Conn ahead by scores of 7-5, 7-4-1, and 6-6, Louis would have gotten desperate, and Conn would have stayed on his bicycle. But they couldn't, and besides, Louis wasn't prone to desperation. He knew he was behind, and just in case he didn't, he had Jack Blackburn in the corner telling him so. Conversely, Conn's corner pleaded with their fighter to stay on the move because he was ahead, but, encouraged by his success in the 12th, Conn was convinced he could take Louis out in the 13th.

As the round opened, he walked right to the champion and fired away, which was, of course, exactly what Louis had been hoping for all night. It wasn't long before a Louis hook found the mark, all but paralyzing the challenger. After that, Conn couldn't have boxed if he wanted to. Most fighters in his position would have jumped for joy at such a happy occurrence, but not Louis. Calmly, patiently, without a hint of urgency in his step or a change in his expression, Louis methodically and skillfully followed his wounded foe around the ring, dropping bomb after bomb. Finally, a combination culminating with a blistering right hand dropped Conn in a heap, and referee Eddie Joseph counted him out with two seconds remaining. So the oddsmakers were right when they said Louis would win. They just didn't know he would need an all-time great finish to do it.

JAKE LaMOTTA KO 15 LAURENT DAUTHUILLE

September 13, 1950



"The Raging Bull" puts Dauthuille down and partway through the ropes

Those familiar with the trials and hardships that comprised LaMotta's life know that "The Raging Bull" made a career of courting disaster. Whether it was breaking the law on the tough streets of the Bronx neighborhood where he grew up, taking on the guards in a juvenile detention home, or accepting everything an opponent could throw at him just to see if he could handle it, LaMotta loved to gamble. Fortunately—or unfortunately, depending on your point of view—LaMotta made his living as a prize fighter, a vocation that affords more than sufficient risk for a man bent on living dangerously. Even then, sometimes just to fight wasn't enough. The risk had to be greater, the danger of losing everything more keen. Against Dauthille, an unassuming French challenger who had decisioned LaMotta over 10 rounds a mere 18 months earlier, LaMotta came within seconds of losing that which he had struggled so long to gain. But, like any good gambler will tell you, it's not over until the last hand is dealt.

Dauthuille boxed well from the start, spearing LaMotta with jabs and quick rights from long range. Boxing smoothly, he jumped out to an early points lead while LaMotta floundered. The champion repeatedly tried to goad Dauthuille into a slugfest by lying against the ropes and playing possum, but the challenger wouldn't bite. By the middle rounds, LaMotta's left eye had been hammered nearly closed, and his apathy was such that in both the seventh and eighth rounds, referee Lou Handler scolded him for his lack of effort. After waiting so long to become a world champion, it looked as though LaMotta's reign would be painfully brief.

By the 15th, it looked all but done, and it may as well have been. The challenger led on the cards by scores of 72-68, 74-66, and 73-67, and the round initially went the way as had the 14 that preceded it: with Dauthuille jabbing and moving, and LaMotta pawing and posing. Suddenly, the champion exploded with a hook that caught Dauthuille flush, and the challenger sagged. All at once LaMotta was himself again, and, racing against the clock, he hurled himself at the weary Dauthuille with fearsome tenacity. The challenger tried to hold on, but LaMotta tore into him, driving him across the ring with hook after hook until finally Dauthuille's back touched the ropes. A final torrid hook sent him sliding slowly toward the canvas, his head resting on the bottom rope. He never came close to beating Handler's count. With just 13 seconds remaining in the fight, Dauthuille's title challenge was history. While everyone else raved afterward about the dramatic conclusion, LaMotta seemed nonchalant. To him, it was just another gamble. One that, this time, had paid off.

ROCKY MARCIANO KO 13 JERSEY JOE WALCOTT

September 23, 1952

Marciano lands one of the most famous punches in history

We may know Marciano today as a Hall of Famer, but in the late-'40s and early-'50s he was, in the eyes of most, just another crude, clumsy, inexperienced brawler. One couldn't blame the pundits of the day for their harshness. He was all of these things. But he also possessed an indomitable will and remarkable stamina, not to mention crushing power. He needed all those tools and more against the 37-year-old Walcott, and even then he almost didn't pull it off.

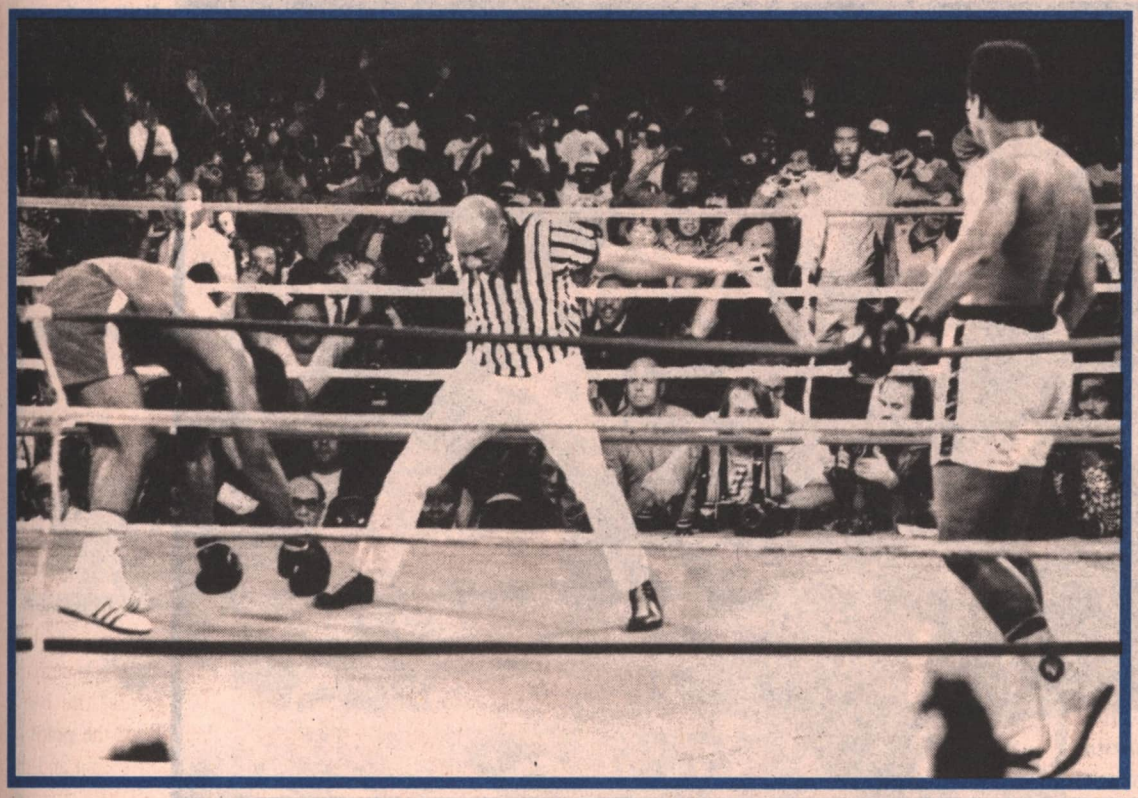
Making the second defense of the title, Walcott, who had claimed the title a year earlier with a one-punch stoppage of Ezzard Charles, jumped to an early lead when, in the very first round, he caught the onrushing Marciano with a short, hard hook. The blow dumped Marciano on the seat of his pants, the first time "The Brockton Blockbuster" had ever been floored. He rose quickly however, and over the next 12 rounds the two engaged in a give-and-take war that left even the fans at Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium dizzy. The sharper, better-schooled boxer, Walcott countered, jabbed, and hooked Marciano endlessly, while the challenger wailed to the body and, whenever he got close enough, clubbed away at Walcott's head.

Though landing his share of blows, Marciano was behind and running out of time late in the fight. After 12 rounds, Walcott led by scores of 7-4-1, 8-4, and 7-5, meaning that even if he swept the final three rounds on all three cards, the best Marciano could get was a draw. Sensing the need to increase the pressure, he worked to shorten the distance between himself and Walcott and backed the older fighter toward the ropes early in the 13th round. From there he positioned himself to launch a right hand. As he let it go, Walcott sent a right of his own, but Marciano's got there first and better. Traveling perhaps 18 inches, the blow landed on the point of Walcott's chin and the soon-to-be former champion immediately sunk to the canvas. At first, it looked almost as though Walcott was merely taking a knee, more stunned than seriously hurt. But while striding calmly away, Marciano added a final insult, a soft, glancing left, and it was enough to cause an unconscious Walcott to topple forward onto his face, where he was counted out by referee Charley Daggert. He never felt that last blow, having already fallen to what many would later call the single greatest punch in heavyweight history.

Marciano's detractors weren't entirely convinced, of course, and wouldn't be until he retired undefeated, four years later. Then they would look back on this as the night the crude, slow, clumsy brawler provided an ending that was really just the beginning.

MUHAMMAD ALI KO 8 GEORGE FOREMAN

October 30, 1974



Foreman fails to beat Zack Clayton's count

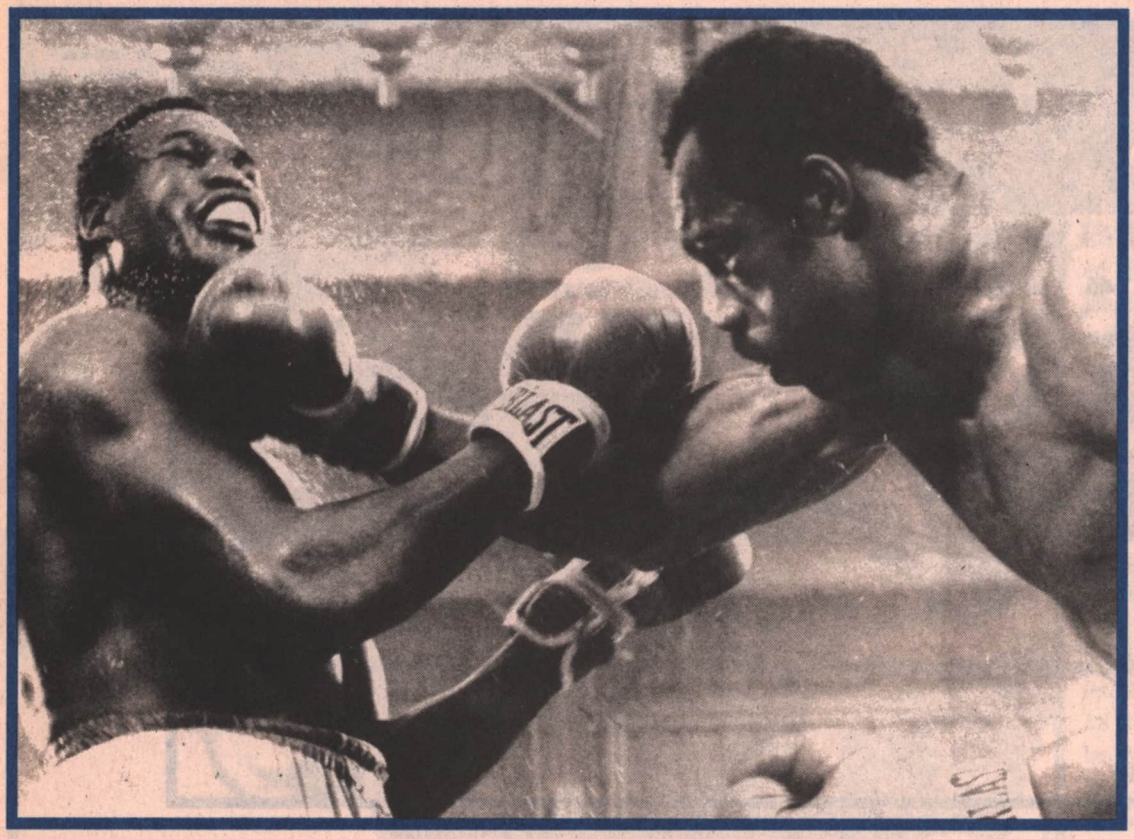
Ali was never a great puncher. You could probably count on one hand the number of one- or two-punch knockouts he scored over the course of his 21 years in the ring. But sometimes, sudden knockouts—and great finishes—are borne of smarts and cunning rather than pure power or strength. And after taking Foreman's blows for 7½ rounds on a hot night in Zaire, Ali proved that sometimes they're borne of great will as well.

It started well enough for Foreman. Before the first round was two minutes old, he had Ali pinned against the ropes, which was the one place conventional thought said Ali should never be. The champion wailed away with glee when he got Ali there, never realizing, as many didn't, that it was the safest place for the challenger. In that posture, Ali used every trick he knew, and before long he realized that in that strange haven, he could absorb Foreman's thunder and tire him out at the same time. Round after round, he took the big man's best artillery, and sure enough, by the eighth, Foreman's clumsiness had turned into seeming drunkenness. His punches were slow, without menace, his power spent. He stumbled this way and that, and, like a puppet on a string, he followed Ali to the ropes late in the round, somehow still convinced that he could win in that posture.

As he had done all night long, Ali greeted him there with a couple of open-handed jabs and a soft right, and then he clowned and grabbed Foreman around the back of the neck. The crowd of nearly 60,000 began to chant "Ali bomaye!" as they had on and off all night, and Ali responded by pumping a pair of hard jabs into Foreman's puffy face, the kind of jabs Ali threw when he meant business. Foreman swung a tired left, missed, and tumbled into the ropes, while Ali spun out toward the middle of the ring. Foreman followed him, and for a split second, it was Foreman with his back to the ropes. Ali lashed out with a lightning-quick jab and then threw what he would years later call the best punch of his career. The right hand caught Foreman standing straight up with his chin high and his hands low, and it sent him tumbling to the canvas. As he lurched forward, on his way down, Ali stood with his right hand cocked, but never threw it. He didn't need to. Foreman came close, but failed to beat referee Zack Clayton's count. It was over, just like that, at 2:58 of the round. Two punches and the mighty Foreman was vanquished. Ali was The Greatest again.

LARRY HOLMES W 15
KEN NORTON

June 9, 1978



Norton and Holmes fought as if their lives depended on the outcome

Heavyweights aren't typically the sport's most exciting fighters. While the big guys drive the game and capture the most attention, any true fan will tell you that it's the smaller fighters who are more skilled, more active, and frequently, more exciting. But as Holmes and Norton proved at the conclusion of their unforgettable war, the right pair of heavyweights, when pitted against one another, can provide unmatched drama.

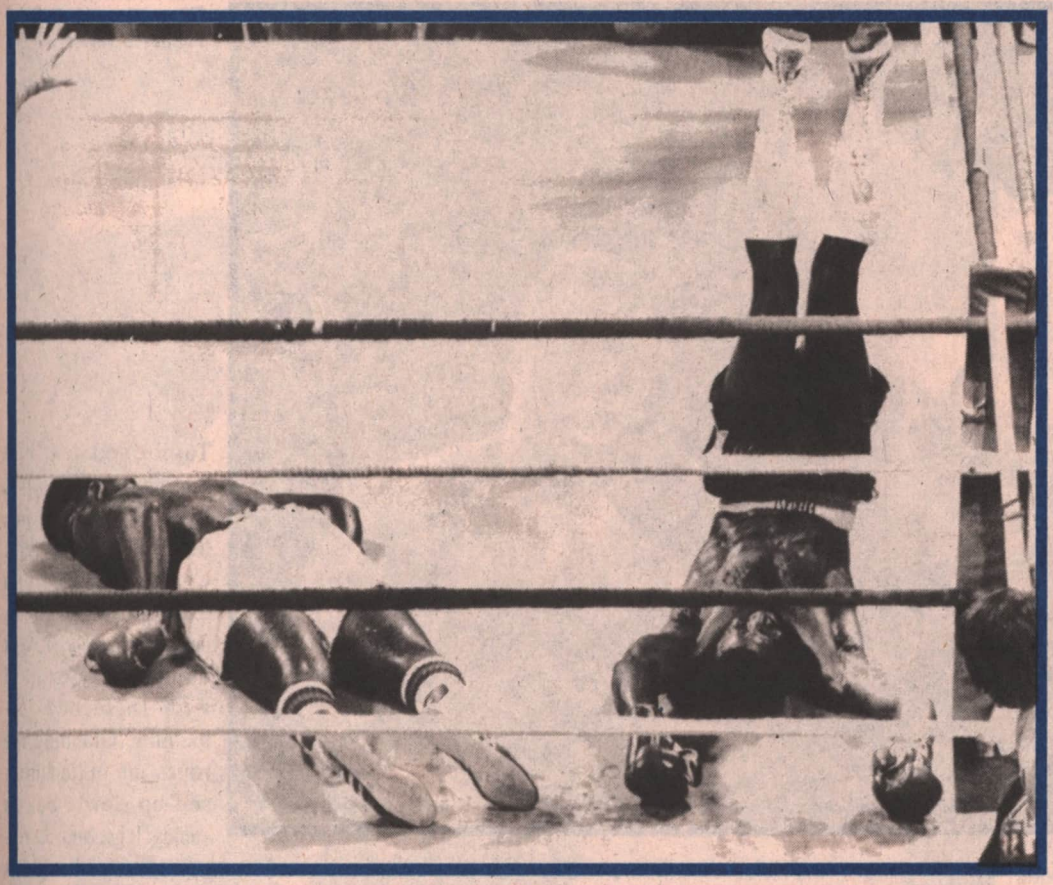
The two fought a spirited, give-and-take battle over 14 rounds that would have been enough to send the fans home happy even if not for the great finish. If the 15th were only as exciting as, say, the 13th, we wouldn't have complained. For two big heavyweights, the pace was swift and action-filled, the fighters evenly matched and focused. Fighting through the pain of a torn muscle in his left biceps, an inspired Holmes pumped jab after jab into Norton's face to build an early lead. The muscle-bound Norton willed his way back into the bout in the middle rounds, rocking the younger challenger with hooks and some big overhand rights. Going into the final round, the judges had the fight dead even. And both fighters seemed to know it.

Norton broke through first, stunning Holmes with a pair of hooks and battering him against the ropes. He pounded away at the challenger's body, cranking up those big arms and launching right hands. With the round more than half over, it looked as though Norton would take the fight with his aggression and strength. But displaying the kind of grit that would help to define his career, Holmes stormed back, rocking Norton with an uppercut and a series of right hands. There was no time left to jab, and the challenger put everything he had into punch after punch while an exhausted Norton wilted. With less than 30 seconds left in the round, Holmes' barrage had pulled him even, and again both fighters seemed to sense that the outcome had yet to be decided.

Over the last 20 seconds, Holmes and Norton stood in the center of the ring and pounded away non-stop as Howard Cosell screamed himself hoarse from ringside. Holmes scored right after searing right, and Norton launched one hook after another. Neither took a backward step, and when it was over they had given us some of the best toe-to-toe action in heavyweight history, possibly the best single round ever in a heavyweight title fight. Holmes got the decision and with it the WBC heavyweight title. We got the thrill of a lifetime.

MIKE WEAVER KO 15 JOHN TATE

March 31, 1980



Tate tumbles and Weaver flips in electrifying finish

Tate was so close. Ever since Cuban legend Teofilio Stevenson toppled him with a single right hand in the 1976 Olympics, "Big John" had trouble getting respect. Though at 6'4" and 240 pounds he was undefeated as a pro and as big and strong as any heavyweight out there, the critics called him clumsy and slow, a giant, slow-witted farm boy. He could box for a big guy, sure, but was nothing to write home about.

By the end of '79, however, Tate had turned back top-rated Kallie Knoetze and Gerrie Coetzee in successive bouts, surviving Coetzee's "bionic" right hand and capturing the vacant WBA title in the process. His first defense, against Weaver, in front of the champion's hometown fans at the University of Tennessee's Stokely Athletics Center in Knoxville, would be the fight to get him some respect. Finally.

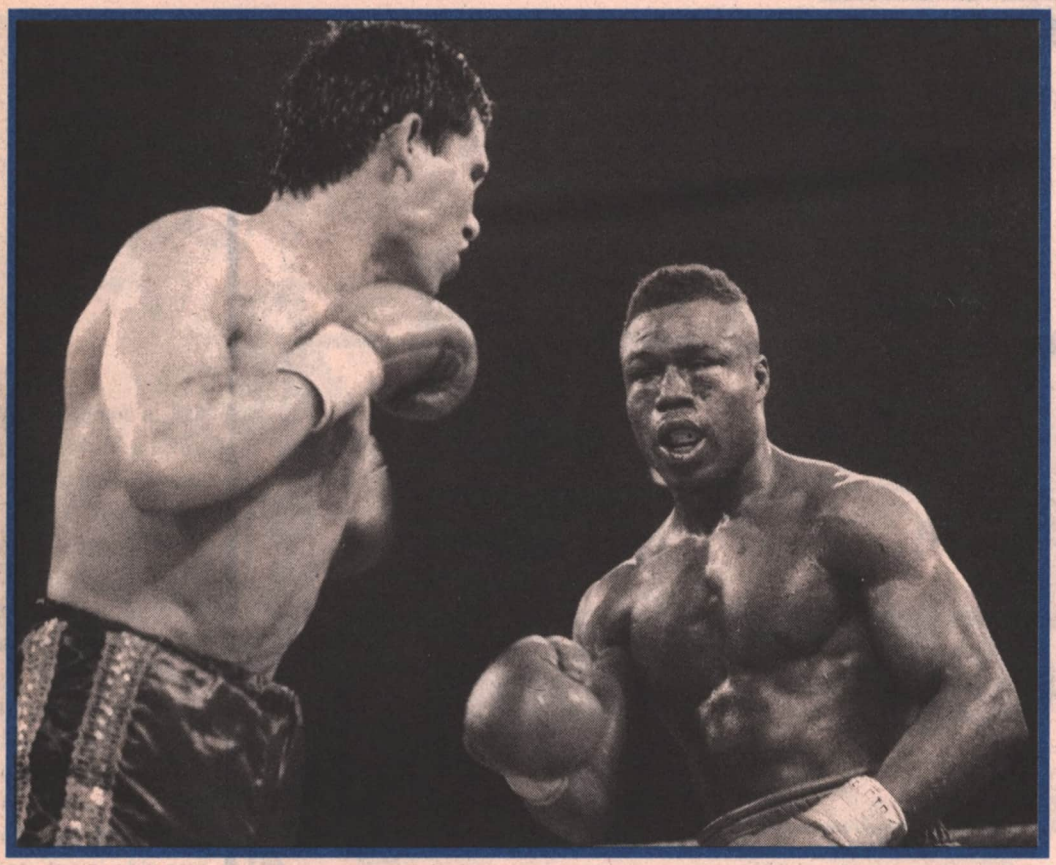
It wasn't that Weaver was the second coming of Joe Louis. He held, after all, the dubious distinction of having been beaten early in his career not only by white hope Duane Bobick—whom Tate annihilated in a round in February '79—but also by Duane's lesser-known brother, Rodney. But a matured "Hercules" gave Larry Holmes fits while losing a June '79 WBC title bid, and if Tate could handle him, they could laugh no more.

For 14¾ rounds, there wasn't a snicker in the house. Tate boxed smartly, bouncing lefts and rights off Weaver's jaw and outboxing him at every turn. Save for a scary moment in the 12th when Weaver finally cracked home a hook that rocked him, Tate was in complete control, on his way to a clear decision win and, maybe, some respect.

Both heavyweights were fatigued and languid going into the 15th round, and there was no reason to expect anything to happen that hadn't already happened in the previous 14 stanzas. All Tate had to do was ride it out, and with under a minute left, it appeared certain that he would. Then Weaver's left hook collided with Tate's jaw as the two struggled near the ropes. Big John froze for a second and went limp, then eased forward toward the canvas, gaining speed as he fell. He was out before he hit the floor, and if there was ever a count that was unnecessary, it was referee Ernesto Magana's. On the other side of the ring, Weaver, who began celebrating the moment Tate began his descent, started what was supposed to be a backflip. He changed his mind in mid-flight and fell deliriously to the canvas, a wide grin splitting his battered features. He had reason to smile. After 14 rounds, Tate led on all cards, by scores of 137-134, 136-133, and 138-133. Forty-five seconds from respect. He was so close.

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ KO 12 MELDRICK TAYLOR

March 17, 1990



Chavez moves in to finish a battered Taylor

Superfights don't come around very often. And even when they do, the result often turns out to be less than we expected. Every once in a while though, a superfight lives up to its expectations. On rare occasions, it exceeds them. This was one of those occasions, largely because of what was at stake: Chavez was the WBC 140-pound champion, Taylor the IBF titlist. But there was more on the line than titles. The winner would be generally regarded as the world's best fighter, pound-for-pound.

For 11 rounds, 2 minutes, and 40 seconds, Taylor gave better than he got. He outgunned Chavez from the middle of the ring, ripping off rapid-fire combinations that found the Mexican legend's jaw again and again. When Chavez would land one of his piledriver left hooks, Taylor would respond with a three-punch combination. When Chavez would dig to the body, Taylor would go to his head. His speed was electrifying, and although he led on two of the three scorecards going into the final round, the bout was not one-sided. Taylor's eyes were swollen nearly shut, and he bled from the mouth from the early rounds on. Later, it would be revealed that Chavez' thudding blows had broken a bone in Taylor's orbital socket, and that the cuts inside his mouth forced him to swallow two pints of blood. Still, for 11 rounds, 2 minutes, and 40 seconds, he gave better than he got. And he needed only to get through the bout's final 20 seconds—yes, 20 seconds—to be recognized as the best in the world.

Then Chavez landed the right hand that would bring it all to an end. It staggered Taylor and sent him lurching into a corner, his equilibrium gone, but his heart intact. Chavez followed him there, looking to finish, and another clean right dumped Taylor hard with 16 seconds remaining. Grabbing the ropes, he pulled himself up slowly but on steady legs, and as referee Richard Steele looked hard into his eyes and asked him if he could continue, Taylor stared off to his right, apparently at trainer Lou Duva, who was on the ring apron. The clock ticked down to four seconds left, and Steele again asked Taylor if he could go on. Again, no response. Steele waved it over at 2:58, and it surprised no one when Duva leapt into the ring, in full berserk mode. Chavez wouldn't have had time to land another punch, pro-Taylor supporters shouted. Steele countered by claiming that he wasn't aware of the time left in the round, and besides, he was the referee, not the timekeeper. It didn't matter. Taylor was 20 seconds away from being the best in the world when the right hand landed, and two seconds away when Steele did the only thing he could. Expectations? We had no idea.

GEORGE FOREMAN KO 10 MICHAEL MOORER

November 5, 1994

Foreman finally found Moorer's sweet spot

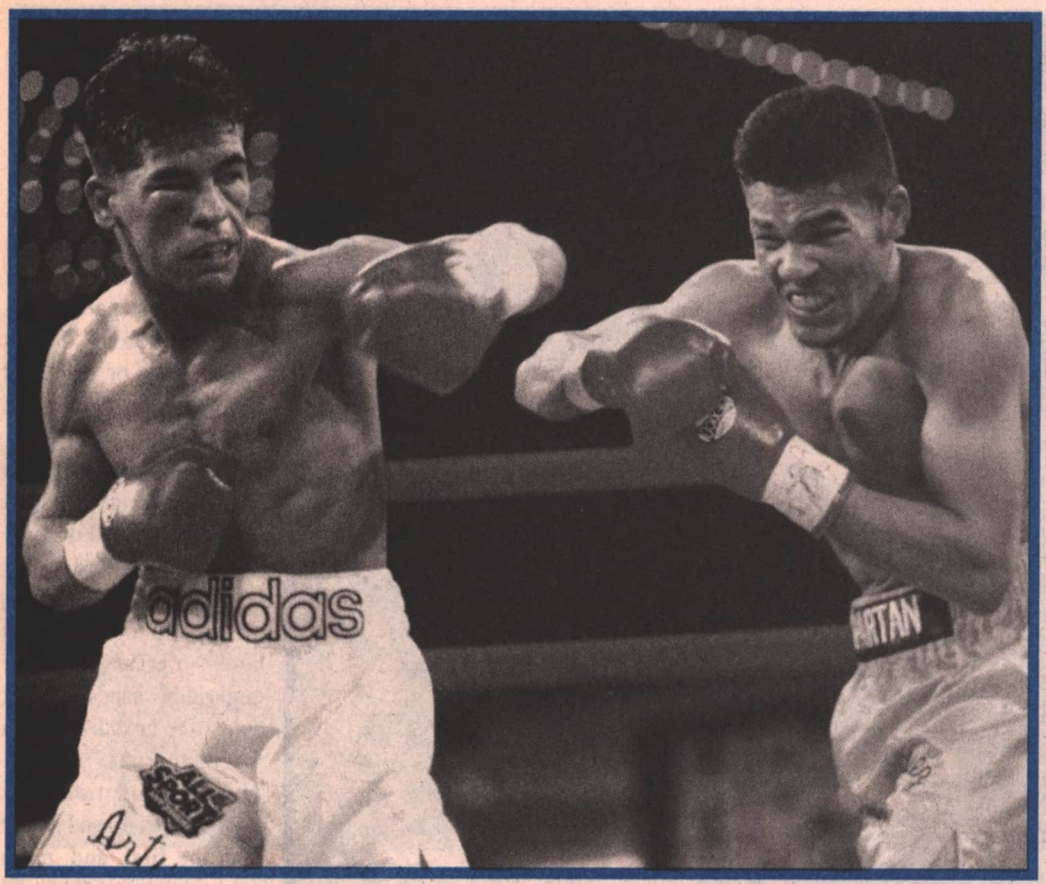
If you're one of those who occasionally needs a reason to keep watching fights, this one kept you going for a long time. There was no reason in the world to think that Foreman, at age 45, had any business being in the ring with a young and undefeated, albeit flawed, champion like Moorer. Foreman's storied comeback, if not over when he lost to Evander Holyfield in 1991, was certainly done when he dropped a decision to Tommy Morrison two years later. The fact that he landed the title shot against Moorer spoke more to his popularity as a folk hero than it did to his boxing ability, and it showed over the first 9½ rounds, as Moorer jabbed "Big George" silly and, when he wanted to, raked him with sharp uppercuts and left crosses. The challenger was hopelessly behind on points going into the 10th round, and the lumps, bumps, and bruises that covered Foreman's face were evidence of the beating he was taking.

The 10th started as a replay of virtually every round that had preceded it. Moorer circled behind that stiff southpaw jab, occasionally stopping to thwart Foreman's slow forward progress with a left cross or two. He continued to ignore trainer Teddy Atlas' instructions to move away from Foreman's right, and instead circled directly into its path. But what was there to worry about? He had taken the old man's best shots all night and withstood them. For the most part, Foreman's clubbing blows lacked steam or snap, and this late in the fight, what could he have left?

Midway through the round, Foreman plodded forward as he had done all night, and offered a soft left-right that landed right on the tip of Moorer's nose. No problem. Moorer dropped his hands to re-set and just as he did, Foreman threw another one-two. This combination was shorter, quicker, and harder than the first, and, more importantly, the right found the point of Moorer's chin, collapsing the side of his face on impact. It was the sweet spot Big George had been looking for all night. Moorer collapsed as if struck by lightning, his back hitting the canvas hard. His eyes open wide and blood welling up under his lips, Moorer raised his head once during referee Tony Perez' count, looked around, put his head back down, and took the rest of the count without moving. By the time Perez reached 10, Foreman was on his knees in a neutral corner, whispering a silent prayer of thanks. The large, pro-Foreman crowd, which had chanted the challenger's name throughout the fight, roared with delight at the storybook ending. And we came away believing in miracles.

ARTURO GATTI KO 6 WILSON RODRIGUEZ

March 23, 1996



Gatti goes for broke against Rodriguez

When a young champion defends the title for the first time, it's customary to give him an easy opponent. It's an unwritten law that the first defense is a gimme, and then the real fights start. The first defense isn't supposed to entail blood and guts, knockdowns and Enswells. They shouldn't be so harrowing as to result in a classic, dramatic ending that couldn't have been better scripted in Hollywood. But when Gatti made his first defense of the IBF junior lightweight title against Rodriguez, that's exactly how it happened.

From the start, the little-known challenger exploited Gatti's defensive flaws, landing right hands with ease and closing his left eye before the first round was through. A hook dropped Gatti briefly in the second, and things got worse over the next two rounds, as Gatti's right eye also began to close. The ringside physician seemed on the verge of stopping it several times, but "Thunder" wasn't going anywhere. In the third, he began a wide-open, all-out body assault that gradually weakened the challenger, and his powerful right hands were finding the mark with greater regularity. Still, Rodriguez couldn't miss with the right, and even after he was downed by a left hook to the liver in the fifth, the Dominican was only a clean combination or two away from a huge upset and a world title.

Rodriguez didn't have going for him what Gatti did, however. He didn't have virtually every one of the fans in The Theater at Madison Square Garden chanting his name; to the contrary, the walls echoed with the roars of "Gatti! Gatti!" Rodriguez didn't have Gatti's ferocious power, and he didn't have Gatti's will. Together, those elements spurred a blinded, battered champion forward in the fateful sixth round. And early on, he absorbed—indeed, walked through—a pair of sizzling right hands that he couldn't possibly have seen coming. He gritted his teeth, lowered his head, and cranked up wide, booming left hooks to the ribcage, the kind of blows that were easily anticipated and countered. He didn't care. He knew he was getting closer.

As the round wore on, Rodriguez looked more and more like a man trying to outrun an oncoming train, certain in the knowledge that sooner or later, he would be overtaken. And with each crunching left hook that Gatti drove to the pit of his stomach—and some a little lower—Rodriguez lost another step. Finally, midway through the round, one such hook made Rodriguez gasp and nearly double over. The end was near. Gatti surged forward and hurled a booming hook that exploded against Rodriguez' exposed jaw. The challenger went down hard and for good, never coming close to beating referee Wayne Kelly's count. The ending could not have been more dramatic, exciting, or heroic. It could not have been more Gatti.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD W Disq. 3 MIKE TYSON

June 28, 1997

Tyson provided boxing's weirdest finish in his rematch with Holyfield

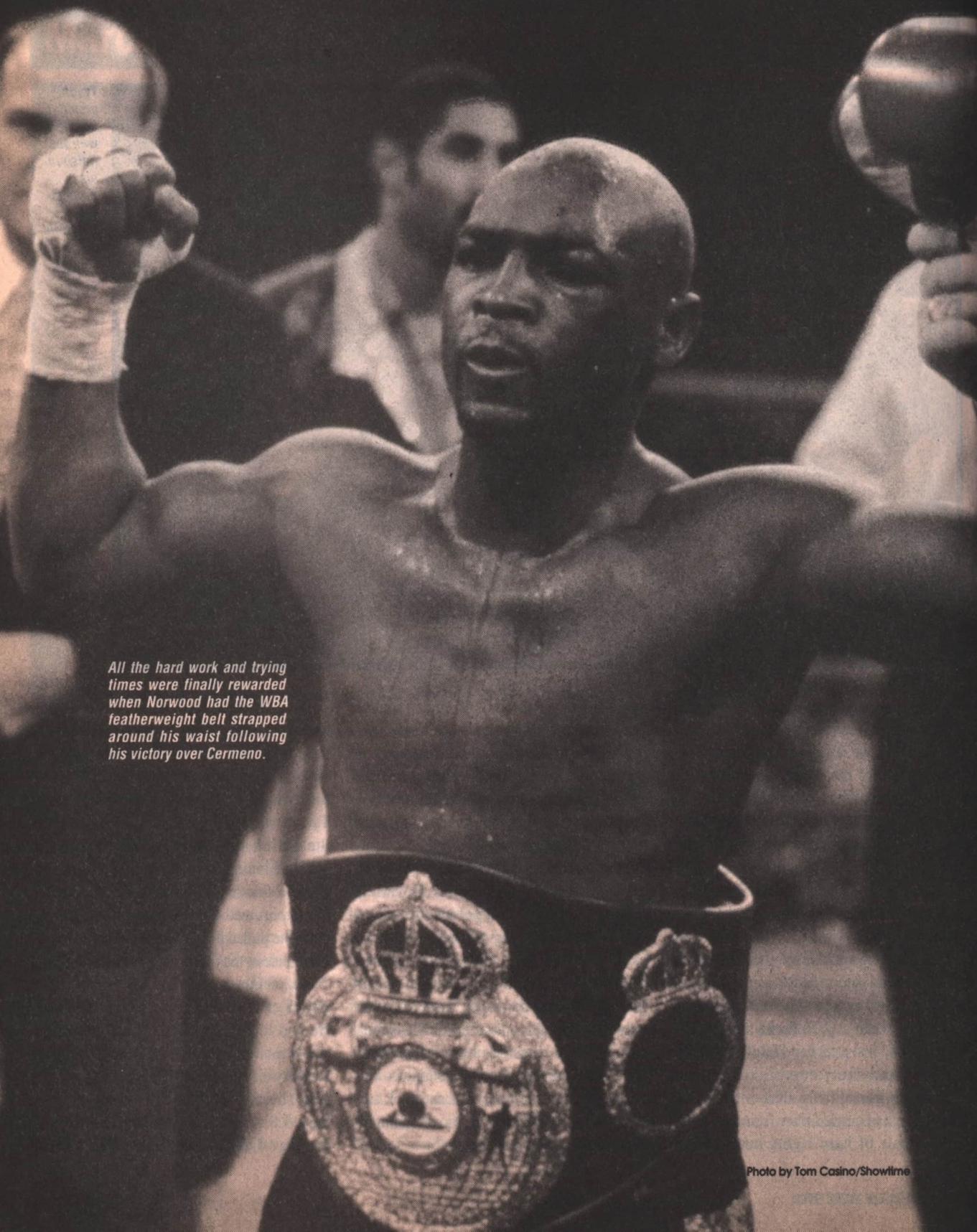
Not all great finishes are the kind we want to relive again and again. Some we'd just as soon forget, but can't because of the imprint they leave on our memories. When Holyfield and Tyson met in a rematch to their first bout, which Holyfield won with a shocking 11th-round knockout, we thought going in that maybe we'd see the Fight of the Year. We didn't know that instead we'd get the Fight of the Ear.

After getting rocked by a hard right in the first round and clearly losing the second, Tyson was enjoying his best moments of the bout when all hell broke loose in the third. He had just attacked Holyfield with a truly Tysonesque combination, and appeared to have finally shaken the tentativeness he had carried over from their first bout. A pair of hard rights raked Holyfield's torso, and a left hook landed square. Then, for reasons known only to himself, Tyson leaned forward in a clinch and bit down hard on Holyfield's right ear. This wasn't Andrew Golota nibbling on Samson Po'uha's neck. Tyson severed a fair-sized chunk of cartilage, which he then calmly spit out onto the canvas as the two separated. Enraged, an incredulous Holyfield jumped into the air and gestured to referee Mills Lane, pointing to the wound. As Lane turned toward Holyfield's corner, Tyson ran up behind the champion and pushed him into the ropes. Lane immediately called a halt, and after a brief examination by the ringside physician revealed that "The Real Deal" could continue—this was only an ear, after all—Lane took two points from Tyson; one for the bite, one for the push.

We all would have been very thankful had the madness ended there. Yes, this was bad, very bad, but if we could somehow still get a decent fight out of it, maybe the bite would be forgotten. No such luck. Tyson was truly gone. Within seconds of the action resuming, he bit Holyfield again, this time on the left ear. The round ended a few moments later, and as soon as Lane confirmed that a second bite had taken place, he pulled the plug on Tyson's evening. Nonetheless, the insanity continued.

As members of both camps flooded the ring, Tyson tried to get to Holyfield again. He had to be restrained by his entourage and at one point could be seen flailing at security personnel. He stormed from the ring shortly thereafter, dodging debris hurled his way from the cheap seats. In that regard, it was a perfect ending. ■

WBA Featherweight Champion Freddie Norwood:



All the hard work and trying times were finally rewarded when Norwood had the WBA featherweight belt strapped around his waist following his victory over Cermeno.

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

LI'L HAGLER SHOWS HE'S MARVELOUS, TOO!

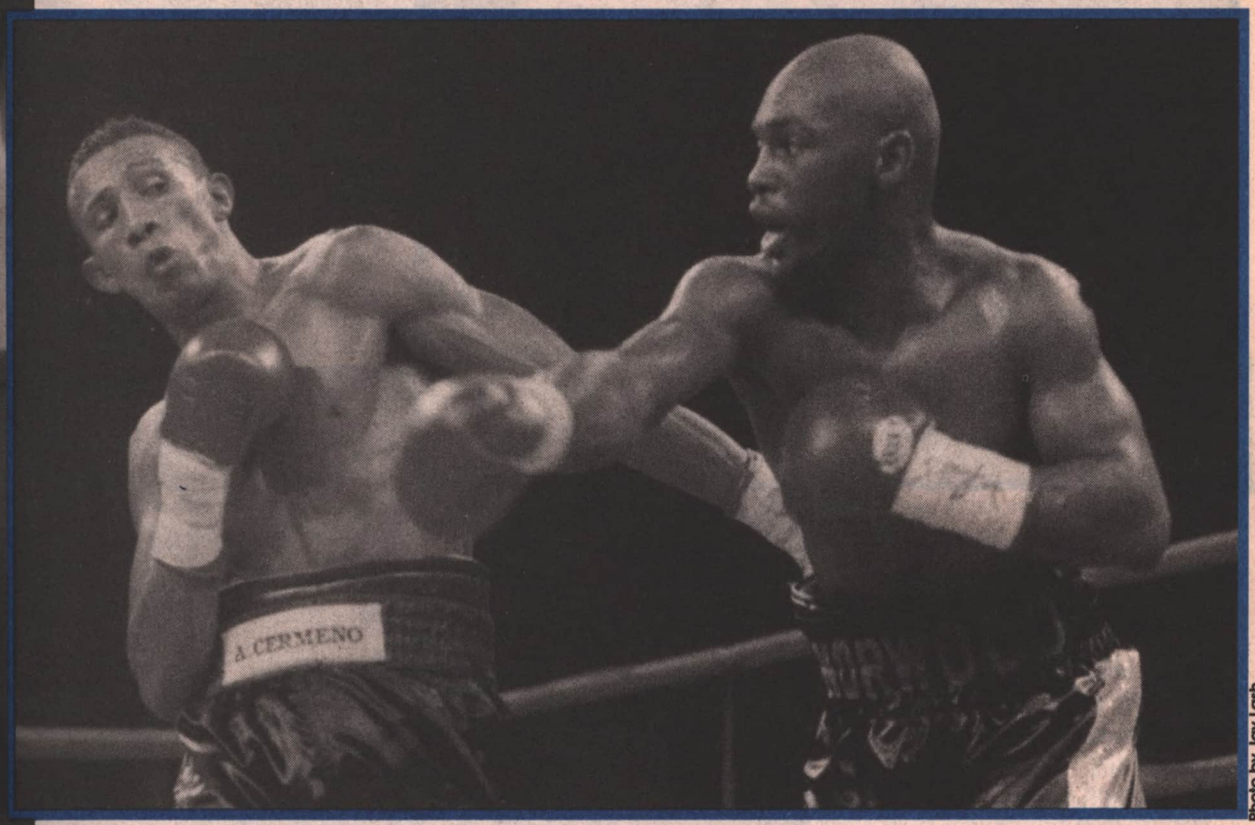


Photo by Jay Lash

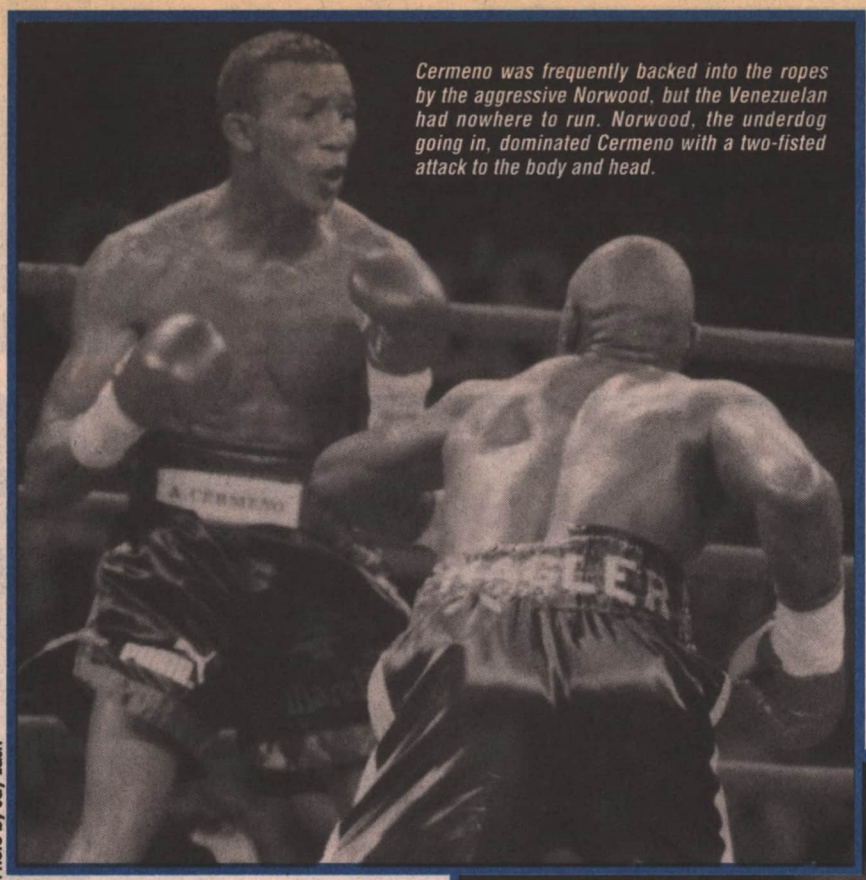
Norwood's power shots jarred Cermeno, and the former WBA 122-pound champ was in danger of being knocked down on several occasions. That Norwood captured a wide unanimous decision over a Don King fighter on a Don King show illustrates how overmatched Cermeno was.

By Eric Raskin

It's boxing's ultimate catch-22, a dilemma almost every contender faces at some point in his career: You can't fight the top guys if you're not well-known, but you can't become well-known if you haven't beaten any of the top guys. For featherweight Fred Norwood, after nine years of toiling as a professional, after 29 fights without a loss, he still couldn't get the fight that would make him a marketable commodity.

Much like his idol, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Norwood had always been, as his manager, Cameron Dunkin, put it, "too good for his own good," a dangerous southpaw who had to go into his opponents' backyards to get fights while the guys he wanted to fight didn't want to risk their titles or rankings against him. One day in 1989, Norwood's brother, Don, suggested that he looked a bit like Hagler, and convinced him to shave his head—and so Norwood's nickname was born. At first it was "Li'l Marvin," a 5'5", 126-pound version of the former middleweight champ. But because not everyone knew who was meant by "Marvin," the name was soon modified to "Li'l Hagler." And the similarities with Hagler continued right through April 3, 1998, when Norwood became a world champion by easily outpointing Antonio Cermeno in Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

And just like that, Norwood found a loophole to that catch-22. Suddenly, all his fights are meaningful to the average boxing fan, and guys who previously had no interest in facing him have a reason to sign the contract. Norwood is the WBA featherweight champion and, like Hagler after he won the world title in 1980, his days of obscurity and hopeless pursuit of big-money fights should be over. Dunkin, however, will not be convinced



Cermeno was frequently backed into the ropes by the aggressive Norwood, but the Venezuelan had nowhere to run. Norwood, the underdog going in, dominated Cermeno with a two-fisted attack to the body and head.

Photo by Jay Lash

until the big fights start getting signed.

"There's a problem with being too good," Dunkin said. "This kid's undefeated, he had to wait since '89 to get a title fight, but nobody wanted to fight him. Kevin Kelley and Junior Jones turned him down. Wilfredo Vazquez wants nothing to do with him. We asked Kennedy McKinney to fight him, and McKinney just smiles and says, 'What are you, crazy?' Of course we want Naseem Hamed, but [Hamed's promoter] Frank Warren is scared to death of this guy."

It's important to remember that Dunkin is far from impartial when it comes to Norwood, so his claims must be taken merely as claims and not necessarily facts. Top 122-pound contender Jones denied that he had ever been approached about fighting Norwood, but his response to the suggestion illustrates how holding the WBA 126-pound belt changes the way potential opponents view Norwood.

"If the fight makes economic sense," Jones said, "then let's get it on. He's a good fighter, a dangerous fighter, but I don't fear anybody. If he's got that title now, then I'd definitely be interested when I move up to 126 later this year."

So though it may be a little while yet before Norwood's really a major player in the chance-of-a-lifetime Hamed sweepstakes, he is on the map now. But the final step to getting on the map was no simple matter. The WBA title wasn't just handed over to Li'l Hagler. He had to take a major risk by accepting a fight with one of the world's finest boxers on 10 days notice, then do what no one else had done since 1993: defeat former WBA junior featherweight champ Cermeno.

"I had just had surgery on my wisdom teeth and I had eight or nine stitches in my mouth," Norwood said. "And my agent, Cameron Dunkin, calls and says 'Guess what. We got it.' I had 10 days to prepare, and my jaw was still swollen, but opportunity was knocking and I couldn't let it pass by. It was the first time I ever went into the ring in less than 100 percent condition, but it worked out. I'm always doing some-

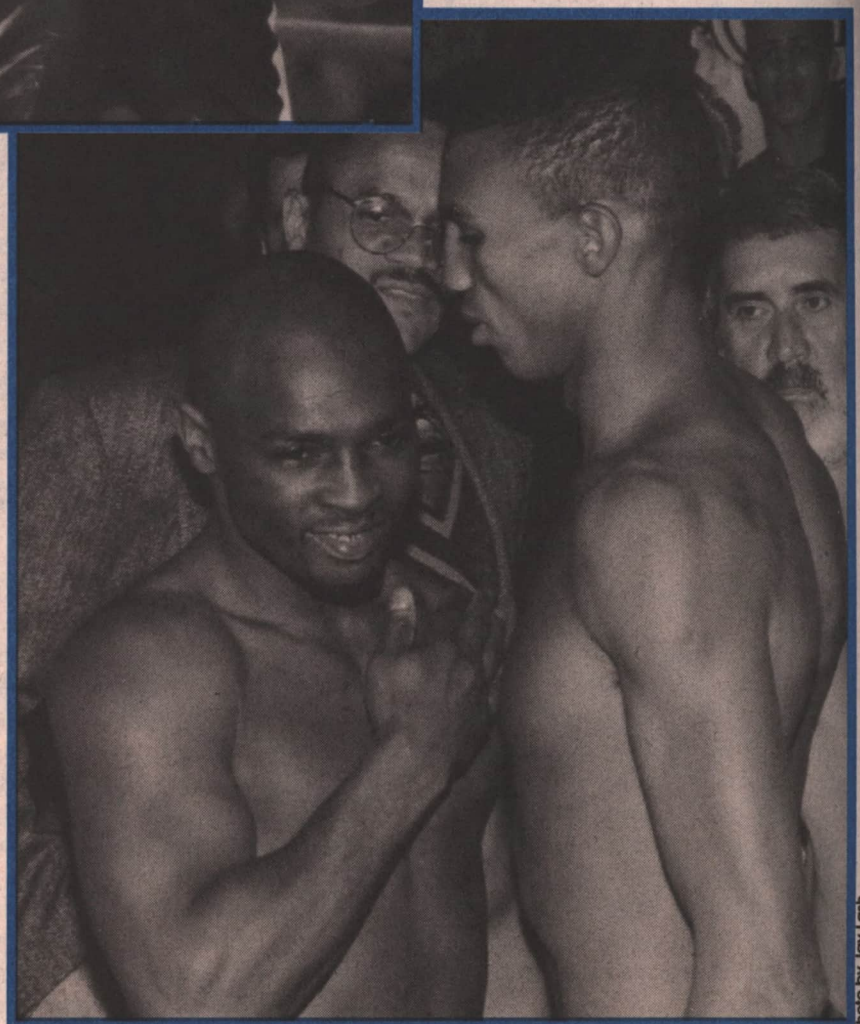
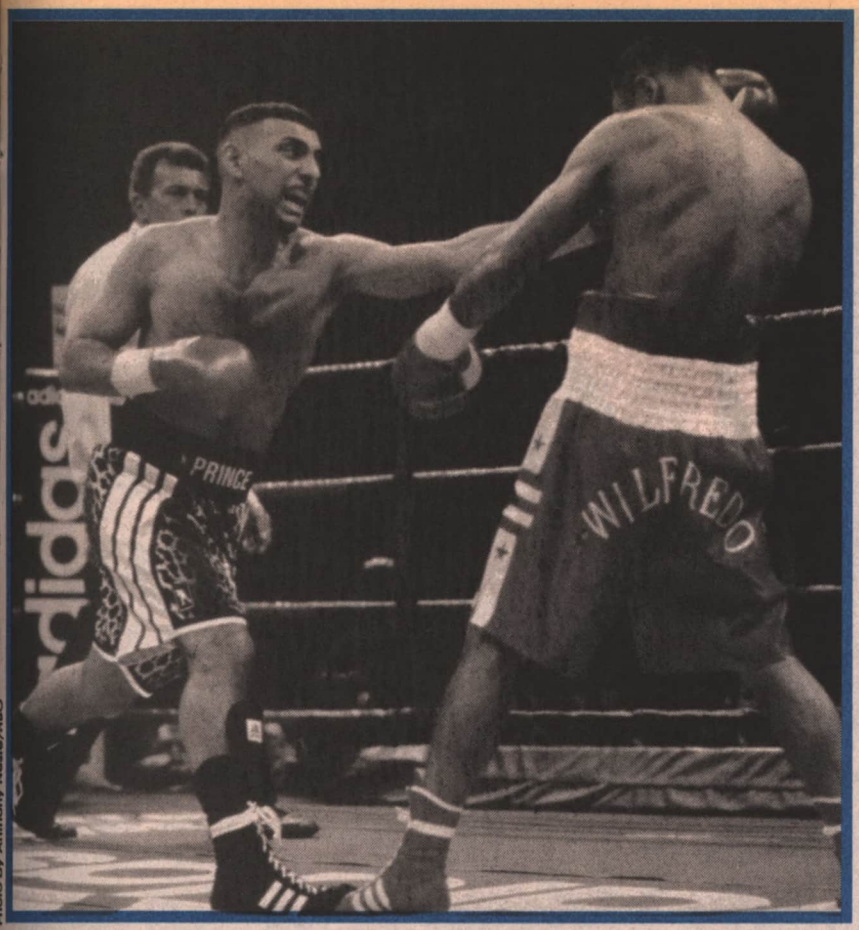


Photo by Jay Lash

The much taller Cermeno tried to intimidate his opponent at the weigh-in, but "Li'l Hagler" would have none of it. Norwood won despite taking the fight on just 10 days notice.



When Wilfredo Vazquez agreed to fight Naseem Hamed rather than defend the WBA belt against Cermeno, the title shot fell into Norwood's lap. Hamed, who picked Vazquez apart in seven rounds, is at the top of Norwood's list of dream opponents.

thing, I'm never just sitting around, so I can take a fight on short notice and still be ready."

Hamed, ironically enough, actually played a very direct role in getting Norwood his title opportunity. Cermeno, the number-one contender for the WBA crown, was set to fight WBA champ Vazquez on the Don King-promoted show. But when Vazquez was offered a chance to travel to England two weeks later and earn substantially more money to fight Hamed, the Puerto Rican quickly accepted. The WBA forced Vazquez to vacate the title, and that was when number-two contender Norwood entered the picture—much to the chagrin of Cermeno, who already held a 1995 victory and a psychological edge over Vazquez.

The 28-year-old Norwood, a native of St. Louis, entered the ring waving both an American flag and a Puerto Rican one, a strategy suggested by his cutman, Miguel Diaz, to get the crowd on his side. The fans at the Ruben Rodriguez Coliseum quickly aligned with Norwood, one small victory for Li'l Hagler. But the seemingly bigger challenge lay ahead: overcoming Cermeno's eight-inch reach advantage.

The Venezuelan probed a busy jab into Norwood's face throughout the first round, but couldn't land any power shots and was already backing up by the end of the opening frame. Norwood used his superior foot and hand speed to get inside and score in round two, and once he drilled Cermeno with a pair of powerful left hooks along the ropes late in the round, there was no looking back. Norwood dictated the tempo to dominate the first 2½ minutes of virtually every round, then would somehow turn it up a notch in the final 30 seconds. While trying to run away, Cermeno, 31-2 (19), was hurt by a right hand in the fourth, then was made even more wary by a pair of clean lefts in the seventh.

The only times Cermeno hurt Norwood came when he landed low blows in the fourth, eighth, and ninth rounds (without penalty from Puerto Rican referee Roberto Ramirez). Even Cermeno's jabs became almost useless as the fight wore on, with Li'l Hagler growing increasingly adept at deflecting them with his gloves. Knowing he was trailing badly, Cermeno became more aggressive in the 10th, but a three-punch combination from Norwood that snapped his head back brought an abrupt end to that strategy. A counter left hook by Norwood in the 12th nearly punctuated the win with a knockdown, but Cermeno was fortunate enough to fall forward, right onto Norwood.

When the final bell rang, Norwood knew he was a champion. "I don't mean to be vain," he said, "but I knew I had won because I felt I had dominated the fight. There was no doubt in my mind."

The crowd erupted when Norwood hopped onto the ropes and thrust his arms into the air, and the applause grew when the scores were read. Samuel Conde (Puerto Rico), Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa), and Erkii Meronen (Finland) scored unanimously for Li'l Hagler, by tallies of 117-110, 118-112, and 118-110, respectively.

"It's like going from rags to riches overnight," Norwood said of his new status as WBA featherweight kingpin. "It's a dream come true, but I worked hard for it. People were 100 percent confident in me, and my whole team helped make it happen. My trainer, Kenny Adams, he's a tough cookie, he wants it just as bad as you do. Getting together with Top Rank and Cameron was the biggest break in my whole entire life, because without them this wouldn't have happened. I'd have been 40 years old, still waiting for a title shot."

With all he went through to get to challenge for a world title, winning the fight was actually the easiest part for Norwood. There was nothing Cermeno could do to hurt him, and the Venezuelan's imposing reach advantage became irrelevant very quickly.

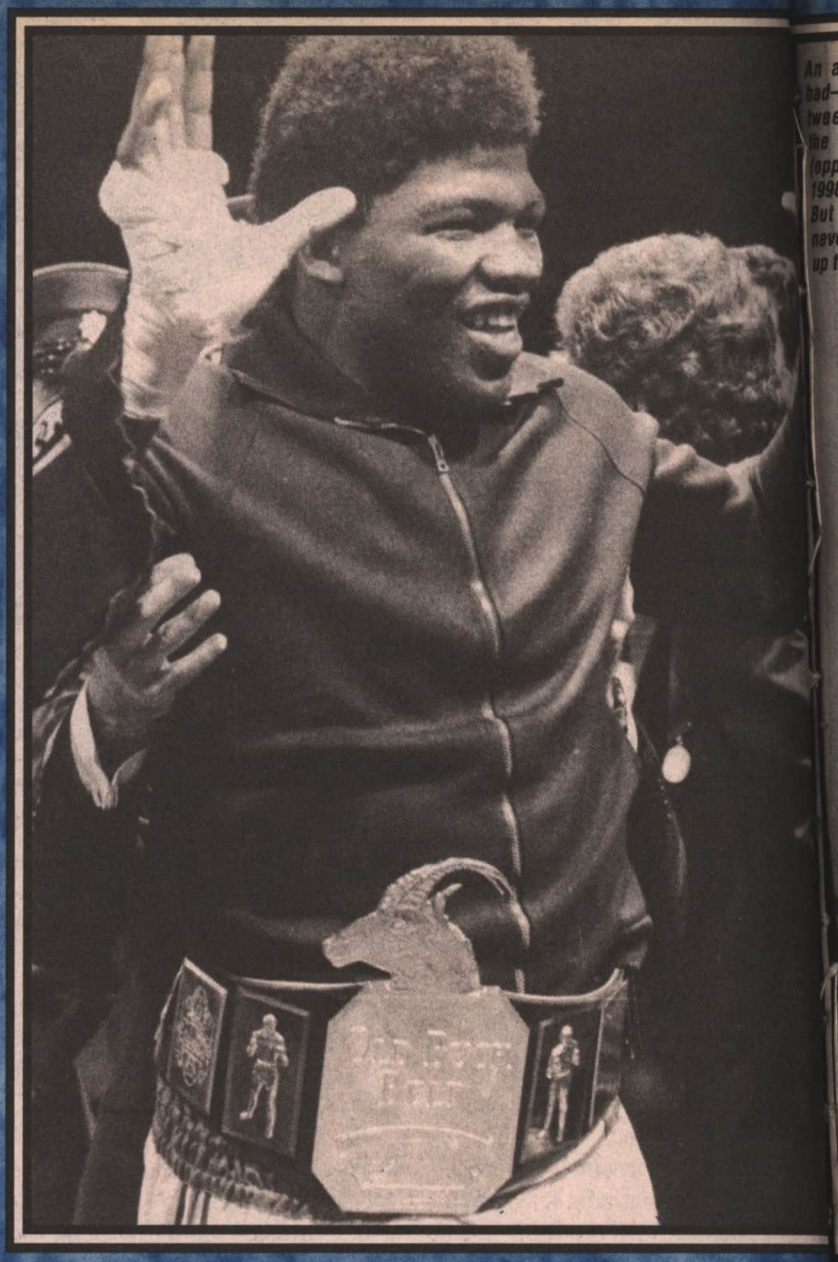
"I'm only 5'5", so everybody's taller than me at 122, and especially at 126. I think of his reach as an advantage for me, even though it seems like an advantage for him. He never really hurt me, and when he kept hitting low, I just wanted to hurt him more then. You don't hit me without getting hit back."

(Continued on page 73)

BIG JOHN TATE

1955-1998

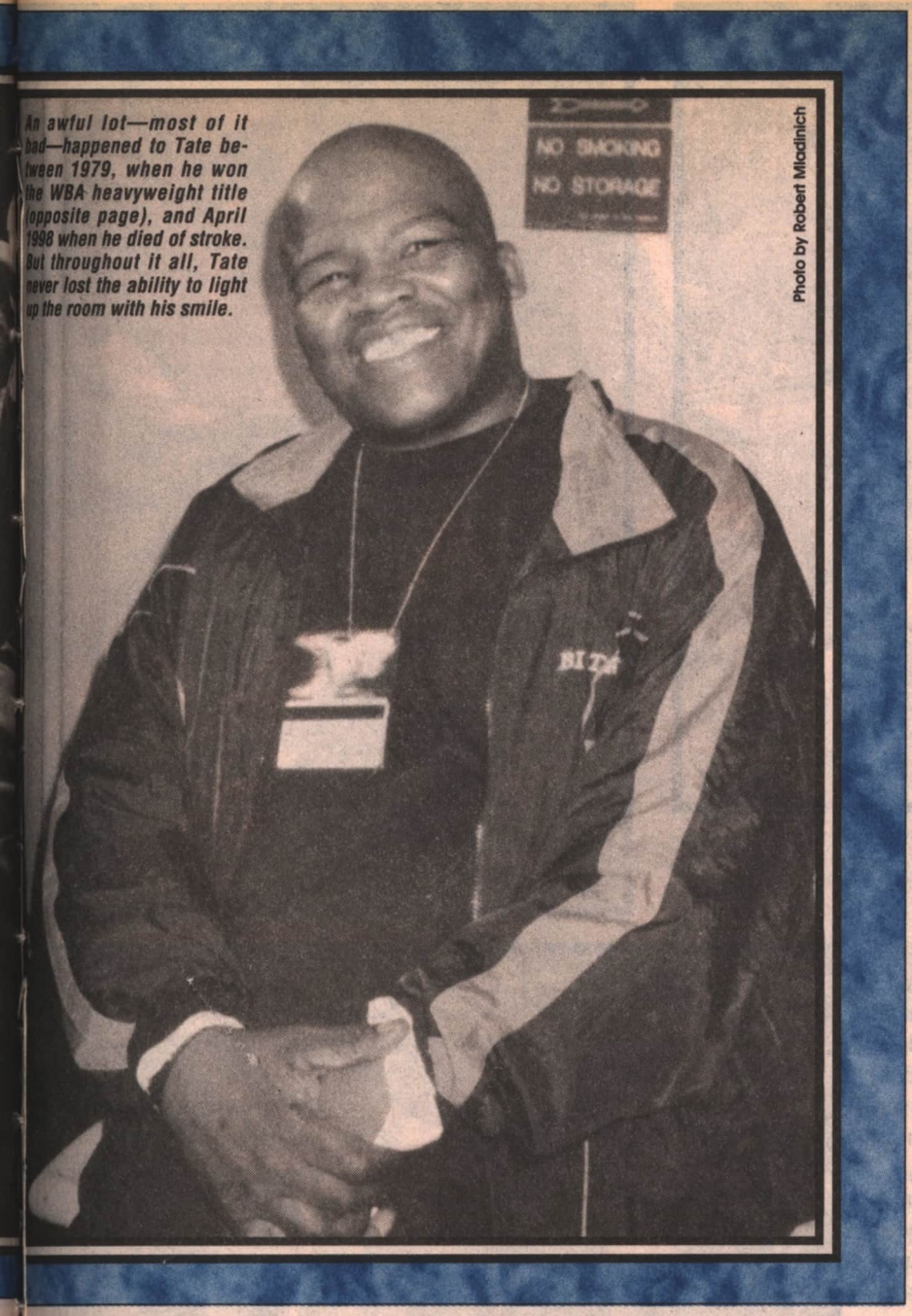
The Sad Demise Of A Fallen Hero



By Robert Mladinich

Even in a sport with so few happy endings, the saga of former WBA heavyweight champion "Big" John Tate is sadder than most. When he won the title in 1979 from white South African Gerrie Coetzee in Pretoria before 81,000 fans, only five percent of whom were black, the dirt poor, illiterate fighter unwittingly became a symbolic emancipator to the nation of black people living under the tyrannical rule of apartheid. After losing the title only five months later before a maniacal hometown crowd in Knoxville, Tennessee, he traded in his fame and glory for a life of petty crime, poverty, obesity, drug addiction, alcoholism, and incarceration. When he suffered a fatal stroke while driving a pickup truck and crashed into a utility pole in the wee hours of April 9, in Knoxville, few tears were shed. (Two other passengers in the vehicle were not seriously injured.) Tate's life had taken such a meteoric downward spiral that he was not even living at the bottom of the barrel, he was living beneath it.

"John was absolutely idolized here in Knoxville," said longtime trainer and manager Ace Miller. "Once he got involved with drugs, however, he went downhill quickly. Success breeds happiness, and once John started hitting bottom, he just went farther and farther real quickly. Beating Coetzee meant a lot to the people of South Africa, but it also meant a lot to the people here. John Tate was the biggest thing that ever happened here. Everybody wanted him at their house or their party every night after he won the title. That's when it all started. He put on a lot of weight, and stopped listening to the people



An awful lot—most of it bad—happened to Tate between 1979, when he won the WBA heavyweight title (opposite page), and April 1998 when he died of stroke. But throughout it all, Tate never lost the ability to light up the room with his smile.

Photo by Robert Mladinich

who helped bring him all of his success."

Tate was coasting to a lopsided decision over Mike Weaver on March 31, 1980, when Weaver connected with a hail-Mary left hook with only 45 seconds left in the 15th and final round. Tate was unconscious before he even hit the canvas. He lay motionless for several minutes as an ominous hush engulfed the arena. Had he won, he would have garnered himself a $3.5-million payday against Muhammad Ali.

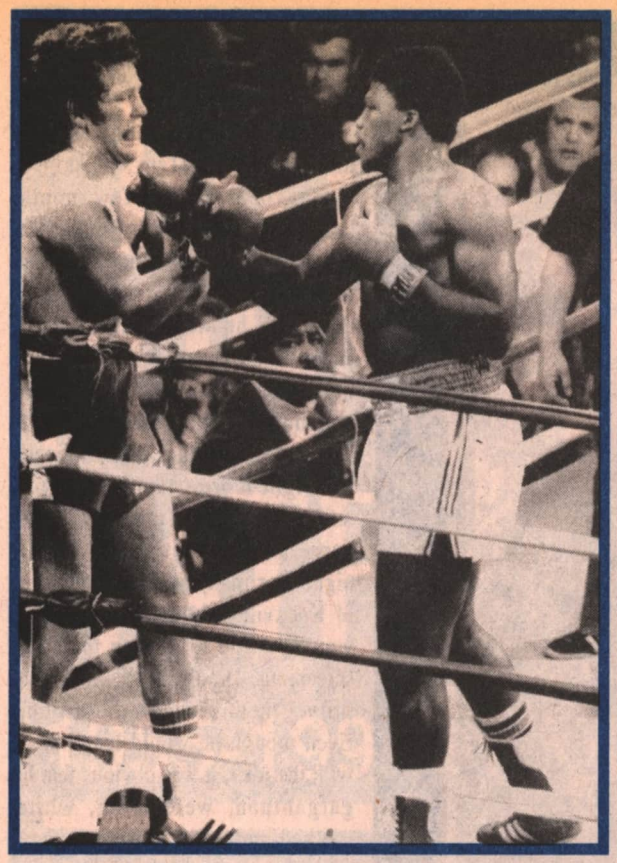
"That fight caused me a lot of torment," Tate said about six weeks before his death, while in Uncasville, Connecticut, to work the corner of heavyweight Keith McKnight for his fight with Obed Sullivan. "It caused me nothing but trouble, and even put me in the penitentiary."

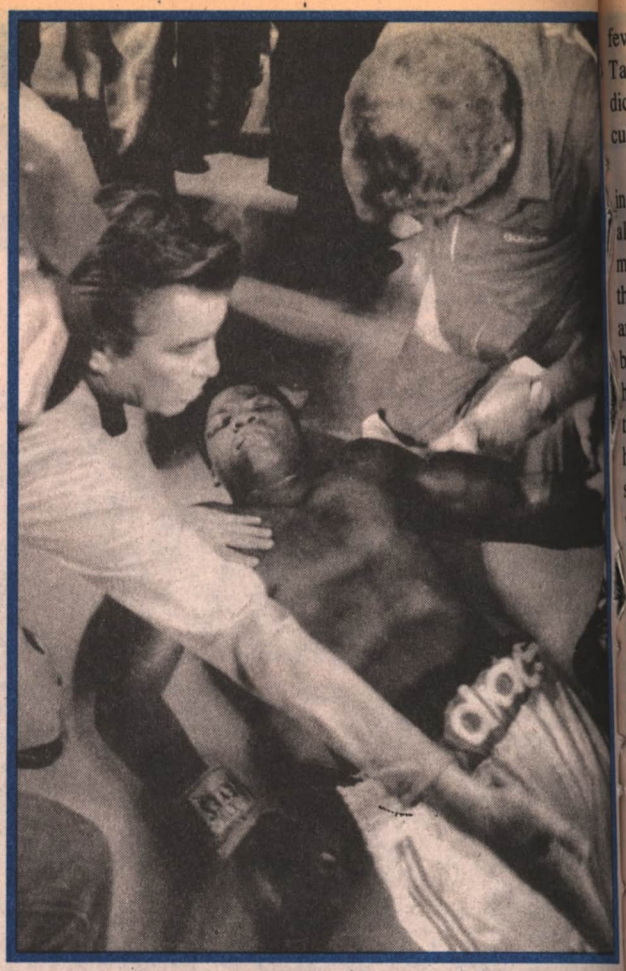
Several years ago Tate was jailed for 28 months for a slew of offenses, including the beating and robbing of a man of $14 at a Knoxville homeless shelter. Tate admitted to breaking the man's jaw, but swore he didn't rob him. "He just kept teasing me and teasing me about the Weaver fight, all day and all night," he insisted. "I admit I broke the boy's jaw, but I didn't rob him. Make sure you write that down. That's important for people to know. I never robbed anybody."

To compound the heartache of the Weaver loss, Tate was stopped by Trevor Berbick a few months later on the undercard of Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran I in Montreal. After being hit twice behind the head, he was again knocked unconscious, except this time instead of lying motionless, his leg was twitching uncontrollably. Although he continued fighting sporadically for eight more years, and would retire with a record of 34-3 (23), his career was essentially over that night. For many years, the children of Knoxville who once revered him would run up to him on the street screaming, "You're John Tate," then propel themselves to the ground. Even though he would laugh along with the joke, it was obvious that his gargantuan, welcoming, white-toothed smile hid a very wounded heart.

"John was just a great big, good-natured guy," said Ian Roach, a 27-year-old bartender at a local university tavern. "He was not a source of pride to anybody around here but a handful of people like me. There were a million Big John stories going around, but if not for the newspapers, I would have thought he was just a big old, gentle ex-pug. About the worst thing I ever saw him do was go the wrong way on a one-way street in an old '77 New Yorker. A lot of times people would ridicule him about his weight and about the Weaver fight. They wouldn't do it to his face, but by talking to him in a condescending manner. Maybe they would point to his belly and say, 'You're the champ?' But John always just smiled and walked away, acting like none of it bothered him. But it had to."

The newspaper stories Roach referred to reflected the other side of Tate's life: the nocturnal wanderings through the city's small underbelly, the beatings he allegedly gave drug dealers before stealing their merchandise, the arrogant lout he could become when his personality was altered after being fueled by cocaine, alcohol, or





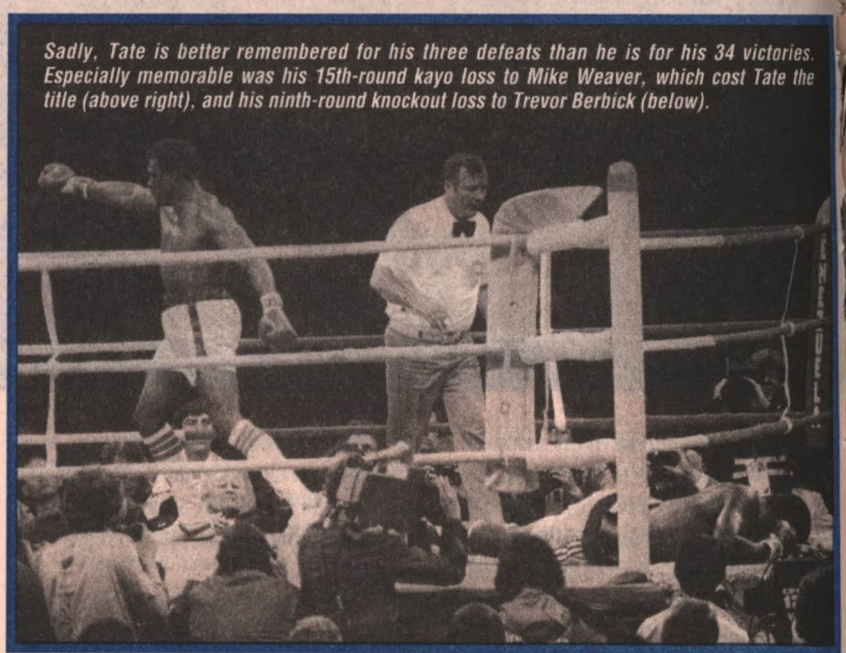
One of Tate's important victories on his way to the championship came against Duane Bobick, whom "Big John" stopped in the first round, eight months before outpointing Gerrie Coetzee for the vacant title.

both. For a man who earned nearly $2-million during his career, and once had a beautiful, educated wife and a house on the posh side of town that would eventually be auctioned off, Tate had strayed beyond the abyss. His crimes showed him to be more of a ghetto prospector than a criminal mastermind.

Among the multitude of charges brought against him over the years were stealing cinder blocks from a local supermarket, public intoxication, drug possession, selling cocaine, and numerous counts of parole and probation violation.

"I ain't been no angel, but it got to the point that they were arresting me for spitting on the sidewalk," he said in Uncasville. "Being involved with drugs made me do some crazy things, and was harder than all my amateur and professional fights put together. I was a junkie, a powerless junkie. I've spent more money than most people ever make. But now I got something in my life that nobody can ever take away from me ... God."

While Tate said he had been clean and sober for several years, there was much evidence to the contrary. One man who saw him regularly in recent months was Horace Kent, a Sevierville, Tennessee, businessman who runs the Volunteer State Boxing organization and manages undefeated heavyweight Shazzon Bradley. Kent said that Tate would visit the gym where Bradley trained two or three times a week. He said he was normally very friendly, and also extremely knowledgeable about the training aspects of boxing. Before leaving, he would always put the pinch on him for a



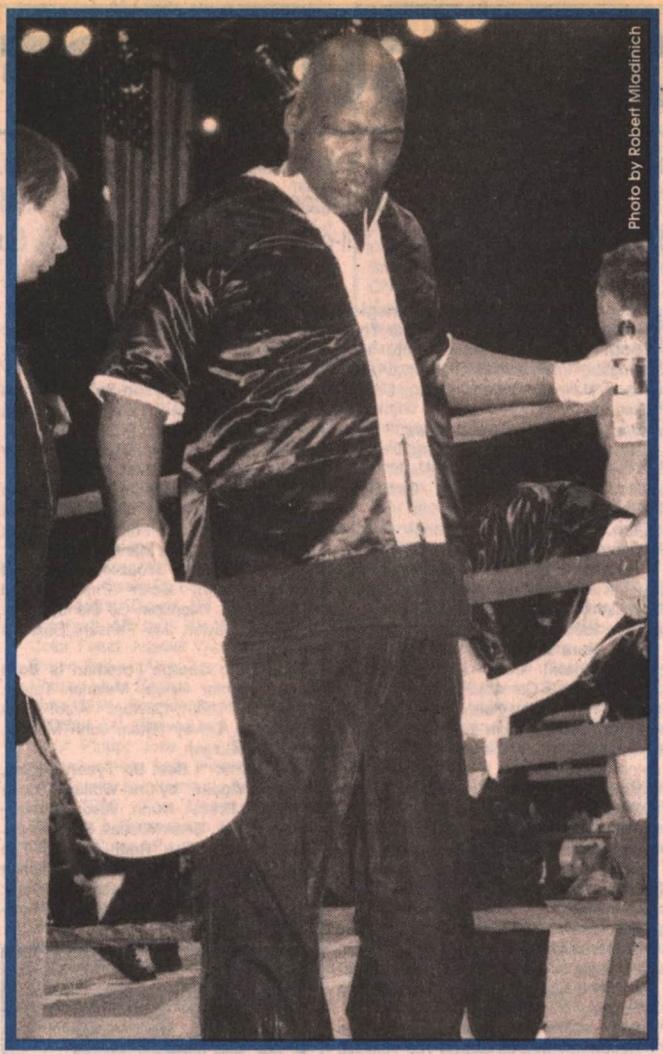
Sadly, Tate is better remembered for his three defeats than he is for his 34 victories. Especially memorable was his 15th-round kayo loss to Mike Weaver, which cost Tate the title (above right), and his ninth-round knockout loss to Trevor Berbick (below).

few dollars. Although he liked Tate, Kent said his unpredictable behavior made it difficult to be around him.

"I was warned against dealing with him, about being in an alley with him if he needed money," said Kent. "He was in the gym the day before he died, and he didn't smell of alcohol, but his eyes were unfocused and his speech was slurred worse than usual. Shazzon didn't mind having him around when he was sober and straight, but when he was under the influence he became very aggressive. He would stand on the ropes yelling in an aggressive, belligerent manner. He just wasn't very pleasant to be around. It was sad to see because he had been such a celebrity at one time. Even before he died, people just viewed him with sympathy more than anything else."

Bradley, 16-0 (15), also grew up poverty stricken outside Knoxville in Athens, Tennessee, with dreams of becoming a professional football player. He made it to the last round of tryouts with both the Green Bay Packers and the New York Giants. His entire life has been a hard-scrabble existence, but he has managed to escape from his own personal quagmire, get a college degree from the University of Tennessee, a full-time job as a caseworker with the Knox County Sheriff's Department, and establish a career as a professional fighter. He believes Tate wore his sorrows on his sleeve as much as in his heart, and used his personal misfortunes to establish an identity for himself.

"Big John had an awesome heart and great survival skills, but he wanted to be the biggest and the best bum ever," said Bradley. "I used to look him straight in the eye and say, 'Big John, you're not a stupid man; you're so much more intelligent than people give you credit for. Why don't you try and get it together, patch up your life and make something of it?' He would just look and listen, then say, 'Son, you have an education. At your age you've got great opportunities. I got nothing but bad knees. I can't even be a garbage man.' It seemed like he didn't want to even try and take control of his life. When I thought he was on drugs, I would just ignore him because I knew that wasn't the real Big John. It was hard to be around him, because he was a good man, and that wasn't the real him."



Though he stopped boxing 10 years ago, Tate's final ring appearance came in February 1998, when he worked the corner for Keith McKnight at the Foxwoods Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut.

It was Kerry Phaar, the owner of Club Knockout in Smyrna, Tennessee, and manager of McKnight, who gave Tate what many perceive as his last shot at some sort of makeshift redemption. Phaar was looking to take McKnight to the next level with the Sullivan fight, which was the televised main event on the February 24 *Tuesday Night Fights*, but his trainer, Luther Burgess, had a stroke and died two months earlier. Phaar met up with Tate while bringing McKnight to Knoxville, 170 miles away, to spar with Bradley, and thought he could complement the camp if he behaved himself.

It is obvious that the very spiritual Phaar is a man who believes in second chances, because when Tate was released from Brushy Mountain Prison several years ago at 37 years of age, he approached Phaar about a comeback. While talking on the phone, Tate said he had to go to court and would call back in a few minutes. He never did, and they were not reacquainted for several years. This time around, Phaar literally took him off the streets and set him up in a small apartment in the back of the gym.

"Around me he was always clean as a whistle, and he worked real well with Keith," said Phaar. "It got to the point that John was even talking about getting some other fighters and working with them. I think he saw the potential to pull something together. He had been a derelict, we even had to buy him new clothes to come to Connecticut because his clothes smelled so bad, but he was excited to get back into boxing because he had tasted style in life, and wanted it back."

Phaar admitted that he received no shortage of quizzical inquiries regarding the relationship from concerned friends, most of whom asked, "Why do you have that crackhead working for you?" He says the answer was simple.

"I saw an opportunity to him restore his life a bit, and at the same time help us, too," Phaar explained. "John had a very analytical boxing mind. Even though he couldn't read or write, he could articulate boxing. We analyzed Keith's fight with Phil Jackson [which McKnight won by decision], with his upcoming fight with Sullivan. John told us that Jackson was a big puncher, but punchers can only throw so many punches. He told us that Sullivan

(Continued on page 77)

BACK ISSUES OF KO

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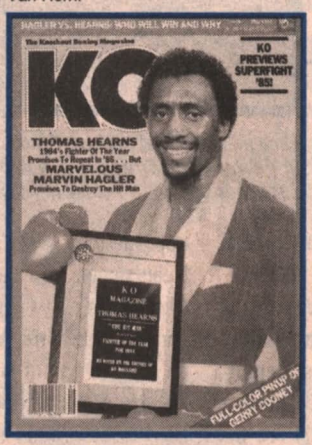

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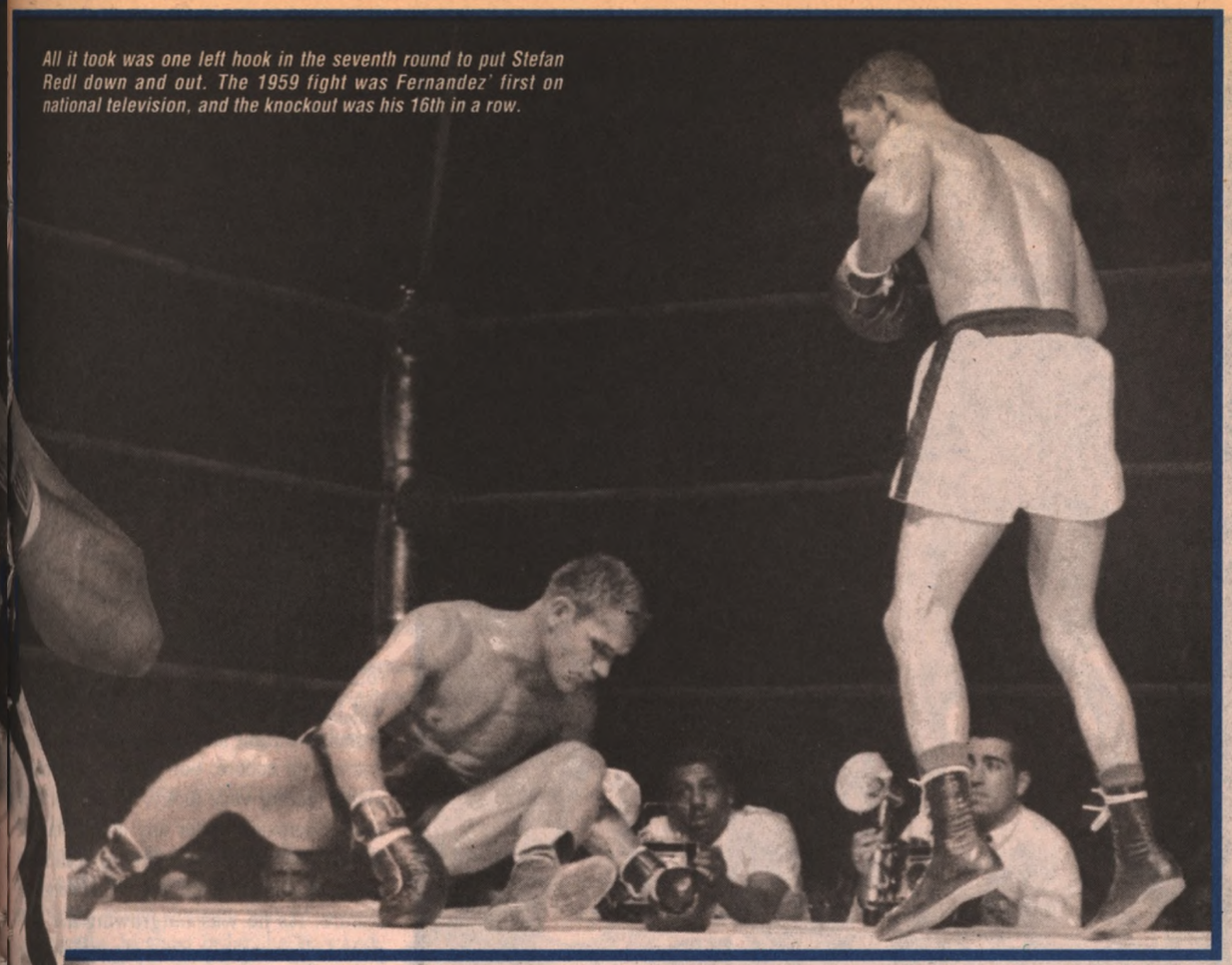
Fullmer, Tiger, Torres, Griffith, Carter

FLORENTINO FERNANDEZ HAD A LEFT HOOK FOR 'EM ALL!



All it took was one left hook in the seventh round to put Stefan Redl down and out. The 1959 fight was Fernandez' first on national television, and the knockout was his 16th in a row.

By Mike Silver

His left arm is noticeably larger than the right. The knuckles of the fist reveal old bruises, bumps, and contusions, the result of its being slammed repeatedly into human flesh and bone with tremendous force.

Over 25 years have passed since former welterweight and middleweight contender Florentino Fernandez retired his favorite weapon, but boxing fans fortunate enough to have seen him in action still remember the bull-shouldered Cuban whose power-laden left hook made him one of the sport's most feared punchers. Today, he lives quietly with his wife, Luisa, in Miami, Florida. Except for his battle-scarred puncher's mitt and a nose that has been broken once too often, Fernandez looks relatively unscathed, considering his 65 professional fights.

A natural southpaw, Fernandez was converted to an orthodox stance while still an amateur. His unusual power was apparent from the beginning. "I believe punchers are born," said Fernandez. "As a very young boy, getting into street fights with my friends or other little boys, I always knocked people out."

His amateur career was brief but portentous: He knocked out 18 of 20 opponents. He is still proud of the fact that he outpointed future welterweight champion Luis Rodriguez in a Cuban Golden Gloves match.

In 1956, at the age of 20, he turned professional. Over the next 2½ years, Fernandez was undefeated in 21 fights, scoring 18 knockouts—all with the left hook. Included among his victims was former lightweight champion Paddy DeMarco, whom he kayoed in five rounds. Havana boxing fans were already envisioning Fernandez following in the footsteps of the island's two great champions, Kid Chocolate and Kid Gavilan.

Fernandez' knockout of DeMarco brought him to the attention of Madison Square Garden executives. On June 19, 1959, he was given the opportunity to display his talent in front of a nationwide television audience. (It would be the first of 16 nationally televised fights for Fernandez.) His opponent was Stefan Redl, a rugged welterweight with a 23-3-1 record that included 13 knockouts. Redl was no soft touch. He had never been stopped and had gone the distance with contenders Gil Turner and Vince Martinez.

1960s welterweight and middleweight contender Florentino Fernandez was one of the most popular fighters of his era, an exciting brawler with one-punch knockout power. The Cuban compiled a record of 49-16 (41) over his 16-year professional career.

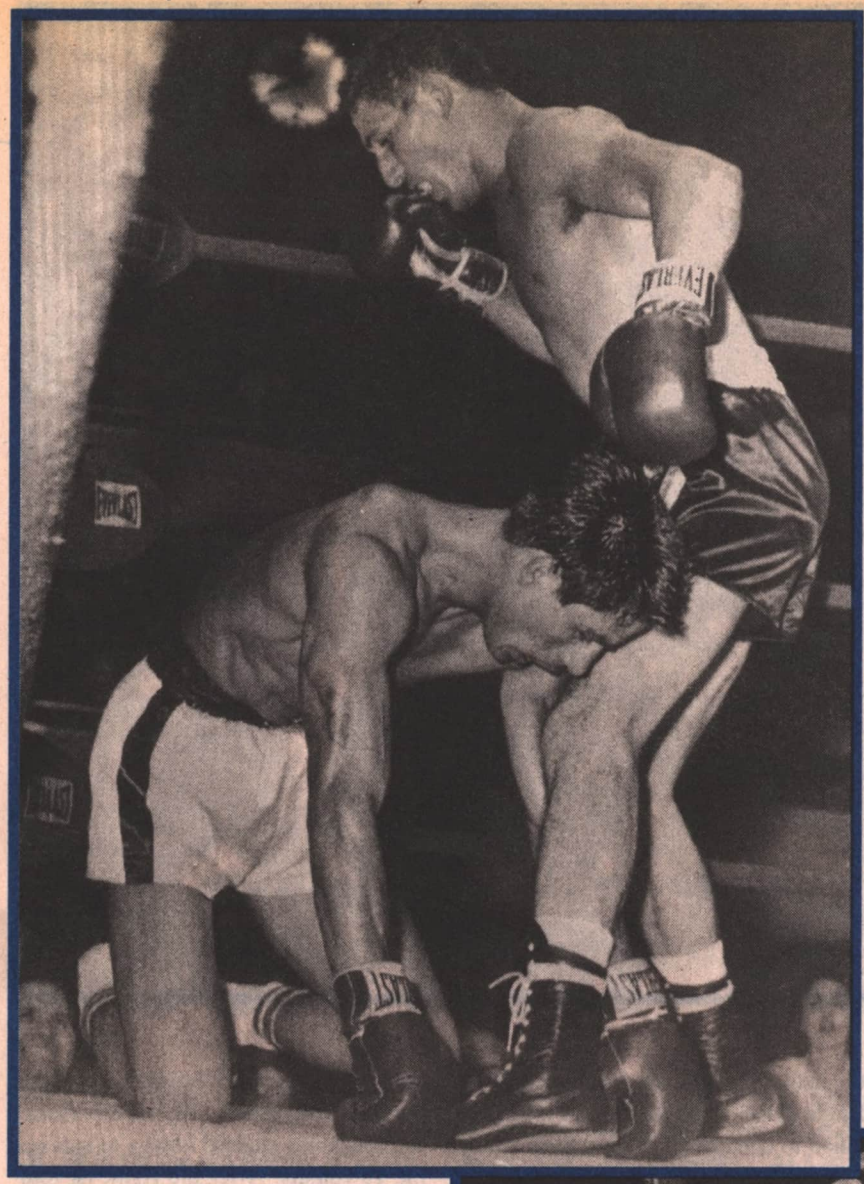
Fernandez, fighting with a confidence that belied his limited experience, displayed a disciplined and persistent attack. He jabbed and hooked to Redl's body and head, but was unable to penetrate his defense with a knockout punch. In the seventh round, he broke through and landed the hook. The stricken fighter collapsed. He struggled to his feet, but was in no condition to continue, and the referee wisely stopped the bout. It was Fernandez' 16th consecutive knockout.

Fernandez had lived up to his advance notices. He indeed was a terrific puncher. But he was still green and unseasoned. How would he do against a ranking contender?

That question was answered three months later in Miami Beach, when he was matched against Gaspar Ortega of Mexico. Ortega was a hardened veteran of 68 professional fights and was rated the sixth-best welterweight in the world. At the bell, Fernandez charged out of his corner winging left hooks. Ortega, who had never been knocked out, was battered to the canvas. It was only the third time in seven years he had been knocked down. He staggered to his feet at the count of nine, but Fernandez was wild with his followup punches and could not land the finisher. In the fourth round, another left hook found its mark sending the game Mexican to his knees. Only his experience and toughness enabled Ortega to survive the 10 rounds. After the fight, he told reporters that Fernandez was the hardest puncher he ever faced. This was high praise coming from a man who fought the likes of Virgil Akins and Tony DeMarco.

Both the Redl and Ortega matches had been televised. Fernandez was now the hottest fighter in boxing. A rematch was quickly arranged to take place in Madison Square Garden six weeks after the first bout. But this time, Ortega knew what to expect. The cagey veteran was able to avoid the heaviest punches and countered effectively.

"After our first fight, Ortega asked me, 'What do you have in your hands?' He was a very good boxer, and very tough," said Fernandez. "In the second fight, he used his experience to adjust to my style. He fought on the outside and never let me get close to him."



In the fourth round of their September 1959 fight, Gaspar Ortega falls to his knees a second time after absorbing a ferocious left from Fernandez. The Cuban won a 10-round decision, then won again, albeit by a slimmer margin, in the rematch six weeks later.

Fernandez, although frustrated by not being able to land his big punch, had forced the action and was awarded a close decision. The critics were not too harsh. After all, the kid was still learning. And his punching power could make up for a lot of mistakes.

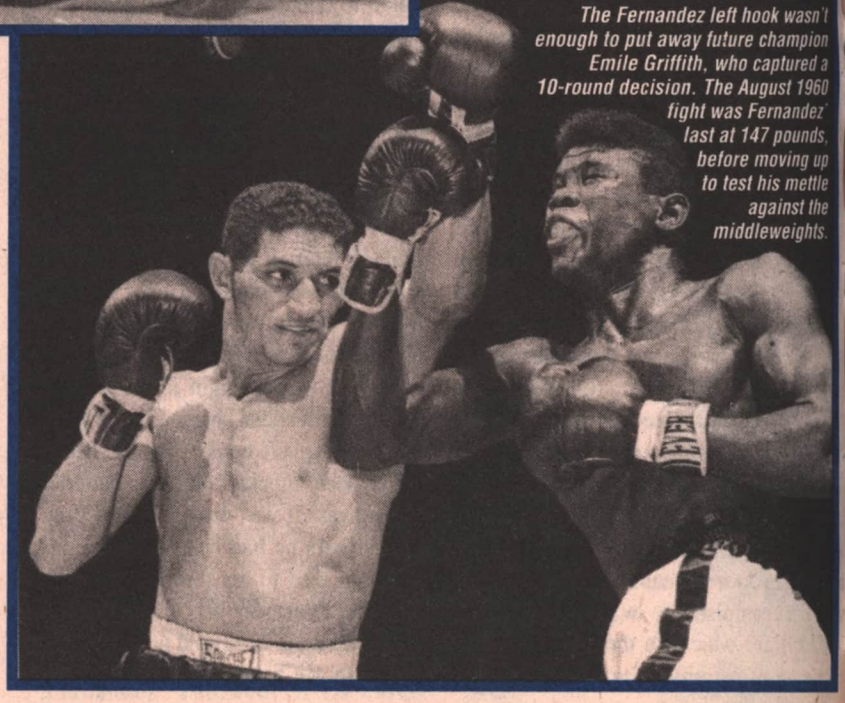
Then disaster struck. Matched against a virtual unknown Filipino named Rocky Kalingo in Caracas, Venezuela, an overconfident Fernandez walked into a right hand and was knocked out in the first round! One month later, in Havana, he avenged the defeat by flattening Kalingo in the second round.

A surprise knockout can happen to the best of fighters. But the loss to Kalingo left fans wondering if the Cuban was indeed as good as he first appeared. Fernandez restored their confidence in his next two fights by outpointing top contender Ralph Dupas and flattening Gerald Gray in the fourth round.

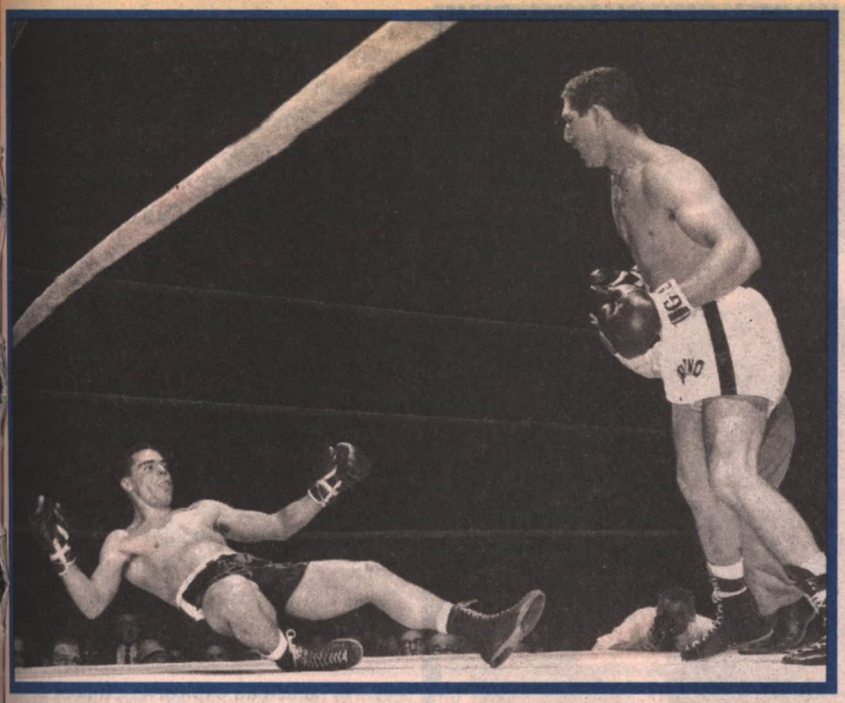
Fernandez was back at Madison Square Garden in August of 1960, facing off against rising star Emile Griffith.

"I took the fight on a week's notice," recalled Fernandez. "I had to come in at 147 pounds, but I weighed about 160 pounds at the time. I had to lose 15 pounds in a week. The effort weakened me. I was sluggish and not at my best, but I still gave him a hard fight. Griffith's strategy for the entire fight was the jab and clinch, jab and clinch."

Fernandez chased Griffith for 10 rounds, but could not catch him, and he lost the decision. Despite his weight loss ordeal, the fight had been close enough to warrant an encore, but Griffith's management, feeling very lucky, would not consider a rematch under any circumstances. In fact, Fernandez was finding it difficult to secure a match with any welterweight of stature. As he was outgrowing the 147-pound class anyway, the only logical thing to do was slap on 10 pounds and go after the middleweight title. Besides, dropping slower-moving middleweights would be



The Fernandez left hook wasn't enough to put away future champion Emile Griffith, who captured a 10-round decision. The August 1960 fight was Fernandez' last at 147 pounds, before moving up to test his mettle against the middleweights.



Fernandez' jump to the middleweight division began with a bang, as he knocked out his first three opponents. His initial victim at 160 pounds was Phil Moyer, who had never been kayoed previously, but didn't make it past the fifth round against Fernandez.

easier than chasing frightened welters around the ring.

The question as to whether Fernandez would carry his knockout power into the next higher weight division was answered emphatically. In short order, he knocked out middleweights Phil Moyer (KO 5), Rory Calhoun (KO 8), and Marcel Pigou (KO 2). Pigou and Moyer had never been knocked out before. Fernandez was proving as devastating a puncher among the middleweights as he had been among the welterweights.

The National Boxing Association (a forerunner of the WBA) middleweight champ, Gene Fullmer, received a lucrative offer to defend the NBA title on network television against Fernandez in Ogden, Utah (the champion's home turf), on August 5, 1961.

Fullmer was a determined and courageous champion with a wealth of experience on his side. He realized it would be foolish for him to match Fernandez punch for punch, so he stayed on top of the challenger, smothering his punches and concentrating on a body attack in an attempt to weaken him. Fernandez caught on quickly and began to trade murderous bodyshots with the champion.

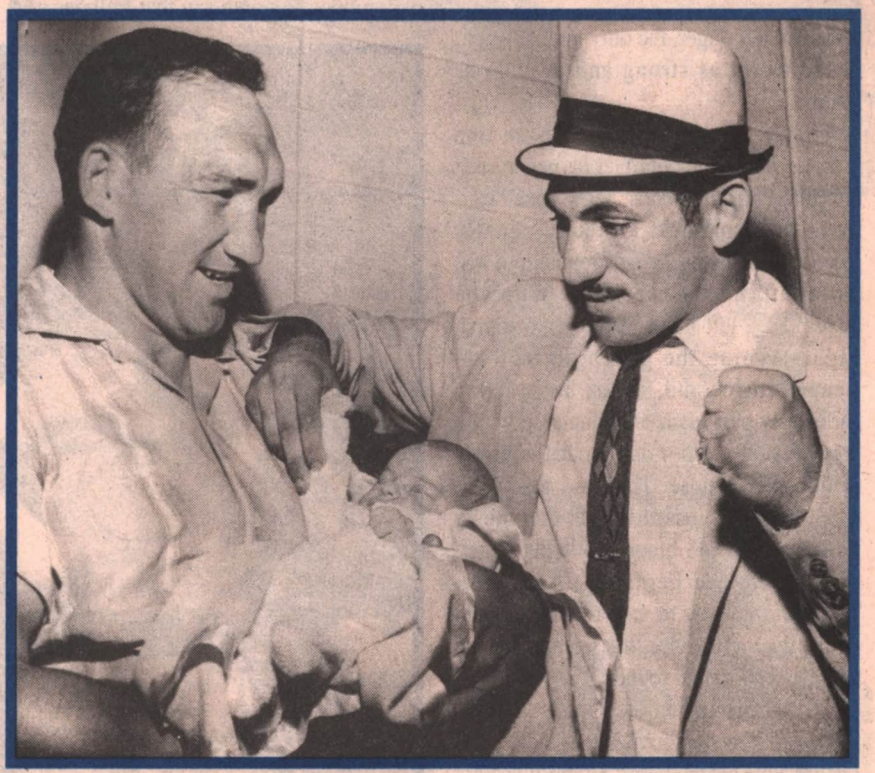
"Fullmer was very strong and could take a lot of punishment," said Fernandez. "He was also a good boxer, who was able to adjust to my style."

Both men took turns belting each other, but neither would give any ground. By the 14th round, the fast pace and sheer brutality of the fight appeared to have slowed Fullmer down. Fernandez then confused him by suddenly switching to his old southpaw stance. The tactic worked as the worn out Fullmer absorbed brutal shots to the head and body. The 15th round was even worse for the champion. (It was later learned that he had broken a bone in his right elbow in the previous round.) He was subjected to a terrific battering, especially to the body, but would not go down.

The decision was split, with one judge scoring the fight for Fernandez and the other judge and the referee ruling in Fullmer's favor, thereby allowing him to retain the title. Marv Jensen, Fullmer's manager, announced after the fight that there would be no rematch.

"Like most of the fans watching the fight on television, I felt I had beaten Fullmer," Fernandez said, "but I was fighting in Fullmer's territory and my only chance to win was by knockout." Fernandez' share of the purse, including television revenues, came to $25,000. The champion received $100,000.

Five months later, Fernandez attempted to re-establish his right to another title opportunity by going against the number-one middleweight contender, Nigeria's for-



Middleweight champion Gene Fullmer introduces his three-week-old son to his next challenger, Fernandez. The nationally televised fight was set for August 5, 1961, in Fullmer's home state of Utah, and it would end up being the only title shot of Fernandez' career.

Fernandez and Fullmer engaged in a thrilling war for the title, and though Fernandez came on strong in the closing rounds, he lost the split decision. Fullmer actually broke a bone in his elbow in round 14, but the tough champion would not give in to the power of Fernandez.

midable Dick Tiger, the only middleweight in the world as strong and durable as Fullmer.

Despite Tiger's reputation as an iron man, he was not about to let Fernandez test his chin. For five rounds, Tiger boxed cautiously. Fernandez, although equally respectful of the Nigerian's reputation, was more willing to take risks. When he attempted a left hook in the sixth round, Tiger—timing the punch perfectly—stepped inside and, as the hook sailed harmlessly past his head, countered with a powerful right cross that landed squarely of Fernandez' nose. The nose seemed to spread open across his face. Obviously broken, it gushed blood, covering Tiger, the referee, and Fernandez with gore. There was no way to stop the torrent, and on the doctor's advice, the referee stopped the bout in the sixth round.

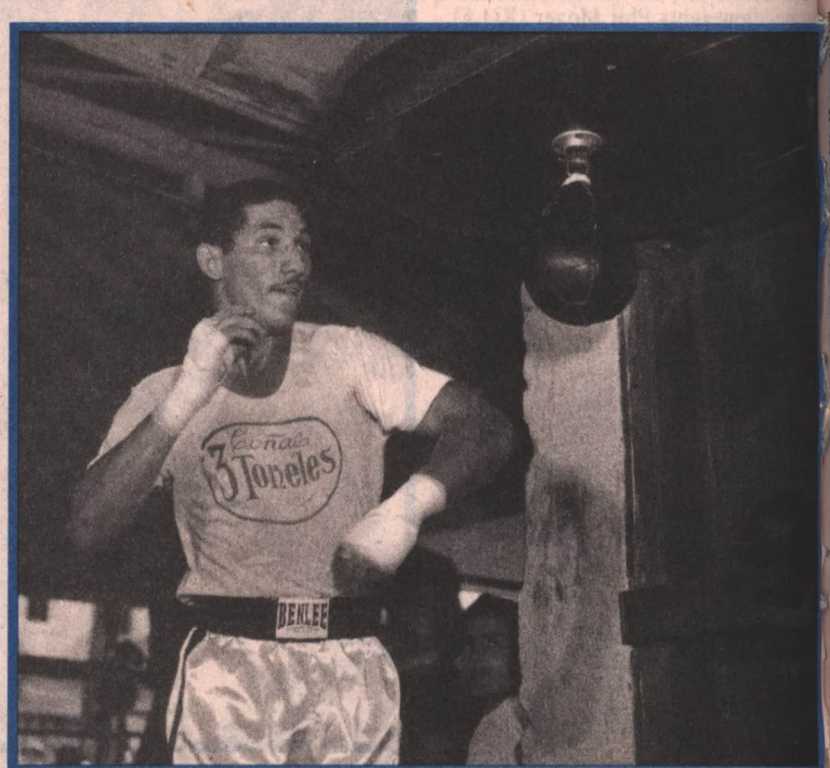
"I was fighting on even terms until the fight was stopped," Fernandez said. "I feel I could have beaten him if my nose had not been broken."

When asked who he thought was the better fighter, Tiger or Fullmer, "Floro" had a difficult time deciding.

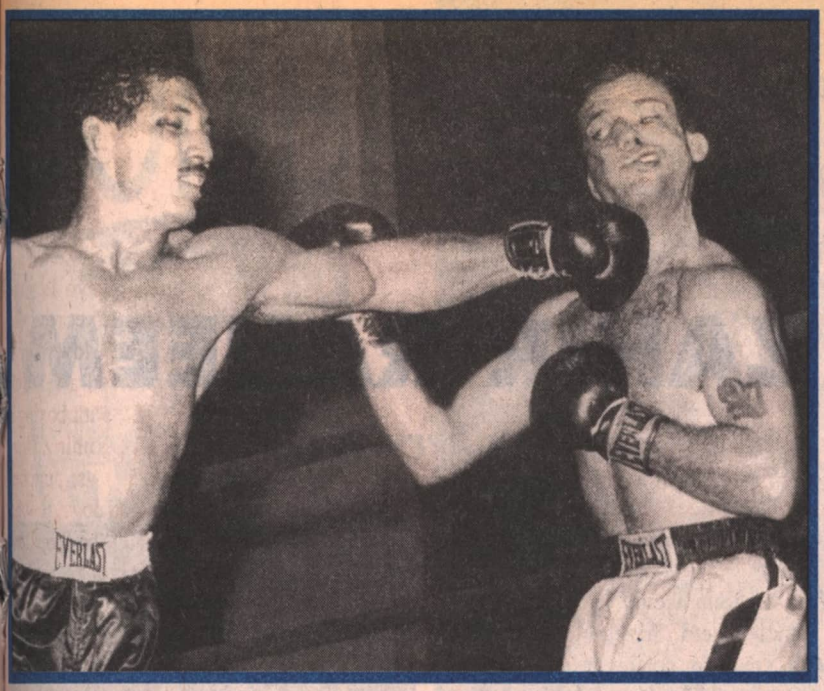
"They were both great fighters and were very strong," he said. "But in comparing them, I would say that Fullmer was the better fighter. I say this only because I had 15 rounds against Fullmer and just five rounds against Tiger."

Three months after the loss to Tiger, old pro Joey Giambra, working the scar tissue over Fernandez' eye, opened an old cut and stopped the Cuban in the eighth round.

With two consecutive kayo losses, Fernandez, at age 26, was not yet ready to retire. After flattening Phil Moyer for a second time, he was offered a Garden match on October 27, 1962, with boxing's latest knockout sensation, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. In a puncher vs. puncher dream match, the fight boiled down to who would get to who first. With the fight less than a minute old, Carter got there first with a quick right cross that dropped Fernandez for a count of five. Carter, moving quickly, gave him no chance to recover. He landed an explosive left hook to the chin that sent Fernandez over the ropes and onto the ring apron, where he was counted out. But according to Fernandez, there is more to this than meets the eye. It seems Floro's mind was on missiles, but not the ones being fired at his head by Carter. The fight took place at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis with the world teetering on the brink of nuclear war. Although



Despite suffering consecutive knockout losses in 1962, Fernandez kept working hard in the gym and remained a middleweight contender for several more years.



Though slightly past his prime by 1964, Fernandez still packed a sensational punch, especially in his trademark left hook. He won this fight against Johnny Featherman by sixth-round stoppage.

Fernandez had left his native Cuba to live in Miami after Fidel Castro outlawed all professional sports in 1961, his family still lived on the island.

"I wasn't really thinking about the fight," he said. "I was just going through the motions, fighting on instinct. I was worried about my mother and brothers and sisters who were living in Cuba."

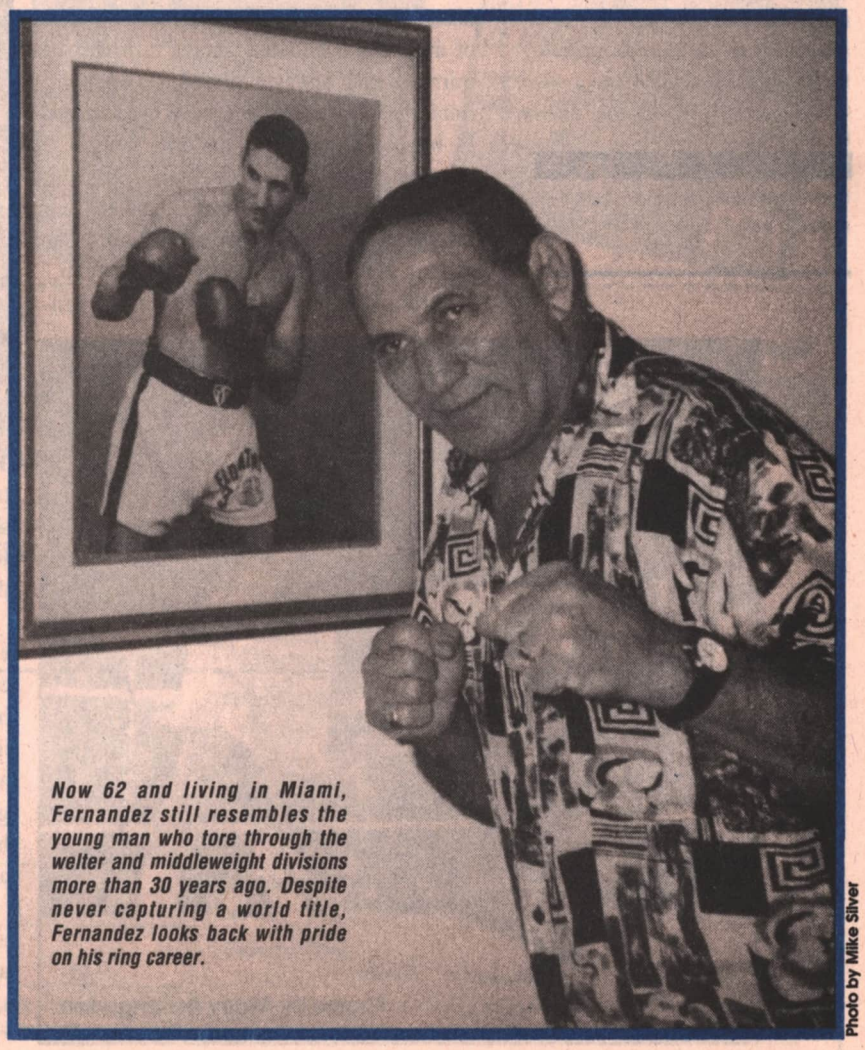
His standing in the ratings may have suffered, but Fernandez was far from finished as a fighter. The following year, he knocked out six of seven opponents. Among his victims were Randy Sandy (KO 1), Joe DeNucci (KO 4), and Dulio Nunez (KO 9). He also lost a decision to Rocky Rivero, but came back to stop the tough Argentinian—on a cut—in the seventh round of their return match.

By far the biggest win of his career came on May 26, 1963, when he knocked out future light heavyweight champion Jose Torres in five rounds. The highly touted Puerto Rican was undefeated in 27 fights and had scored 20 knockouts. Thinking that Fernandez' chin would not stand up to his fighter's heavy artillery, Torres' usually cautious manager, Cus D'Amato, reluctantly agreed to the match.

"I was fighting in his hometown, and Puerto Rican fans wanted him to win very much," said Fernandez. "Three months earlier, in another fight in San Juan, I had put one of his best friends, Dulio Nunez, in the hospital with a concussion. It was in all of the papers how Torres was out for revenge."

Fighting at close quarters for the first four rounds, both men took turns exchanging powerful punches. The action was nonstop, and the fans were on their feet cheering during the entire fight. Although stunned several times by Torres' ripping combinations, Fernandez stood his ground and came back with rib-crunching shots to the Puerto Rican's body. Fernandez was like a machine. No matter what Torres threw, he came right back with repeated left hooks to the head, and the cumulative effect was to eventually sap Torres of his strength and will to fight. In the fifth round, Torres' legs gave out and he went down for the first time in his career. He got up, but another volley sent him to the canvas for a second time. Torres was up at the

(Continued on page 79)



Now 62 and living in Miami, Fernandez still resembles the young man who tore through the welter and middleweight divisions more than 30 years ago. Despite never capturing a world title, Fernandez looks back with pride on his ring career.

Photo by Mike Silver

NEW FACES

ZAHIR RAHEEM

Featherweight

By Joe Santoliquito

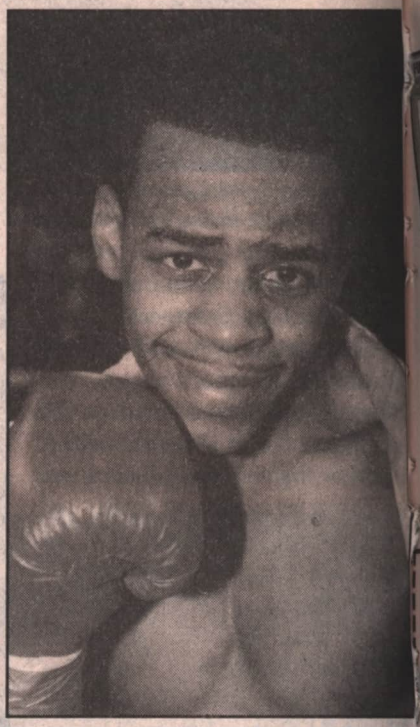
PRO RECORD

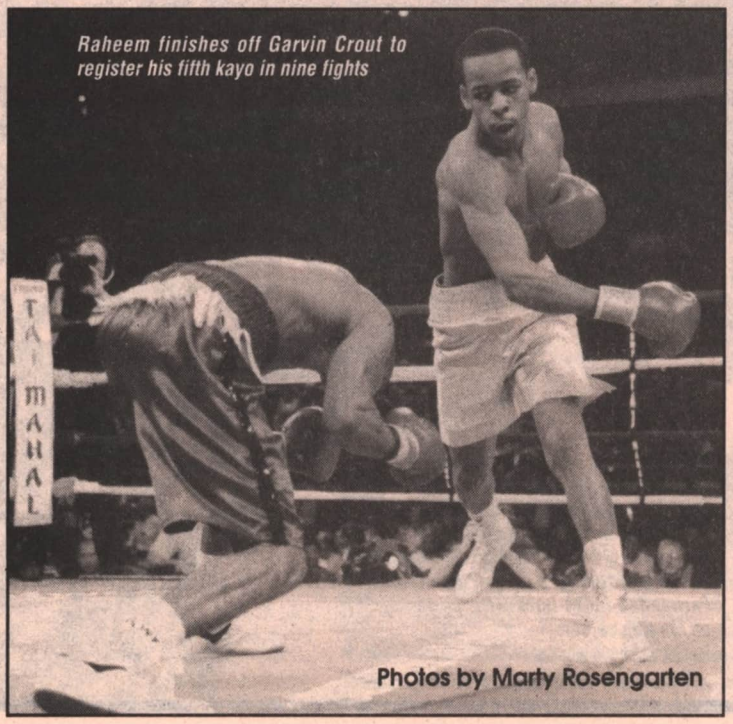
1996		
Nov. 16	Clifford Watford, Atlantic City	KO 4
Dec. 6	Ramon Aragon, Reno, NV	W 4
1997		
Jan. 10	Dennis Roberts, Uncasville, CT	W 4
Feb. 22	Shpetim Sala, Uncasville	KO 2
March 12	Jose Covarrubias, Grand Rapids, MI	W 6
May 14	Scott Buck, Ledyard, CT	W 6
Sept. 19	Lionel Odom, Atlantic City	KO 5
Dec. 6	Terry Smith, Atlantic City	KO 4
1998		
March 14	Garvin Crout, Atlantic City	KO 3

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
9	9	0	0	5

Zahir Raheem likes to be original. That's why he doesn't have a problem taking full credit for coining a new term like "Sleep Boxing." The Philadelphia featherweight had been removed from the sport for about three years, when, nocturnally, he found himself boxing again. He got up in the middle of the night and started jabbing in front of a mirror—with his eyes closed. His mother, ironing clothes a few feet away, was startled by her son's sudden reaction and thought he was going nuts.

"My mom said she turned around and saw me asleep on my feet, boxing in front of the mirror, then I went right back to sleep," recalled Raheem, a 1996 Olympic bantamweight. "I don't even remember it. I was shadow boxing, or it was more like sleep boxing. My mom said she was scared when I did that, like I needed help or something."





Raheem finishes off Garvin Crout to register his fifth kayo in nine fights

Photos by Marty Rosengarten

Raheem decided that what he really needed was to box again. His sleep-boxing episode convinced him of that, and within a year, he had qualified for the Olympics. After a dissatisfying experience in Atlanta, Raheem, or "Z" as he's known to his friends, is back in the gym again, this time hoping to make up for his Olympic disappointment in the professional ranks.

The 21-year-old Raheem is flashy, quick, and has a strong work ethic. He possesses, according to his trainer, Fred Jenkins, all the skills necessary to one day be a world champi-

(Continued on page 80)

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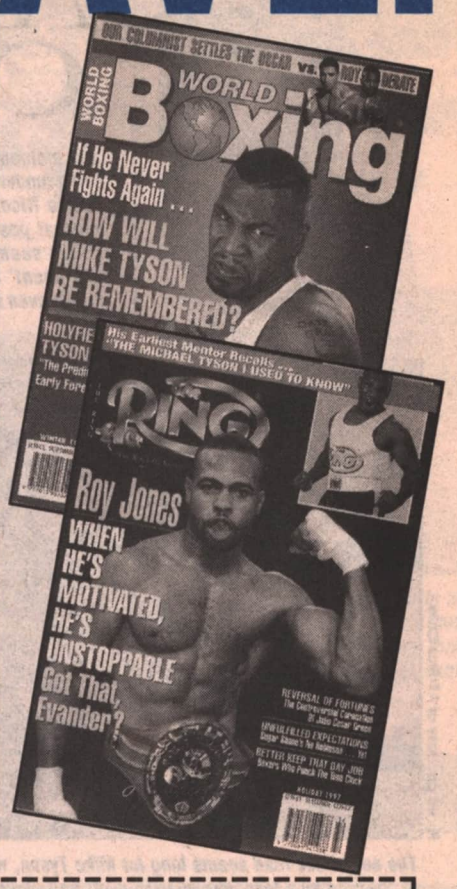

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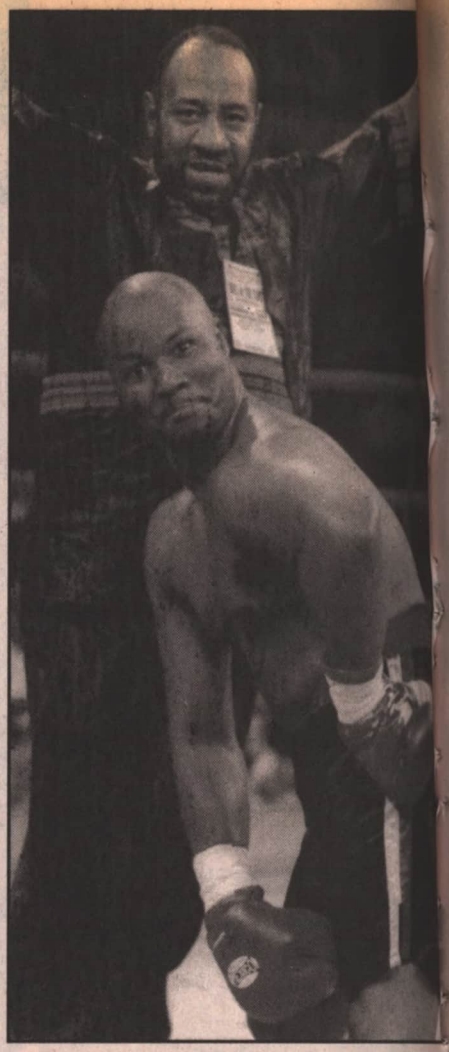


Just moments after knocking out previously unbeaten 300-pounder Imani Lee in the first round on April 3 in Puerto Rico, heavyweight Sedreck Fields strikes an unusual pose. As cornerman Jerome Aiken looks on, Fields seems to be saying, "You didn't expect the 'opponent' to do that, did you?" We're pretty sure Fields even surprised himself with this one.

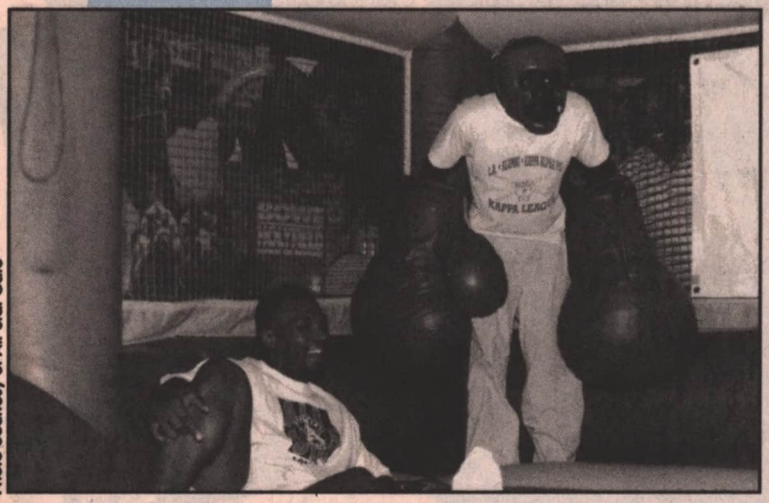


Photo courtesy of All-Star Cafe

The comeback road seems long for Mike Tyson, who was knocked down in sparring by a teenager wearing oversized gloves. Actually, Tyson was just having a good time with several youth groups at the All-Star Cafe in Las Vegas, refereeing matches in the "Boxy Bounce Ring."

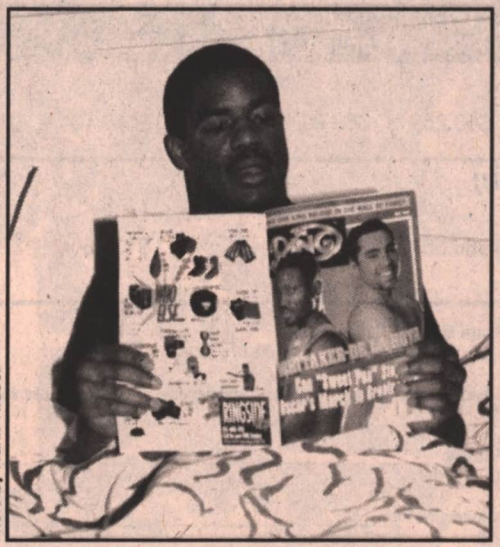
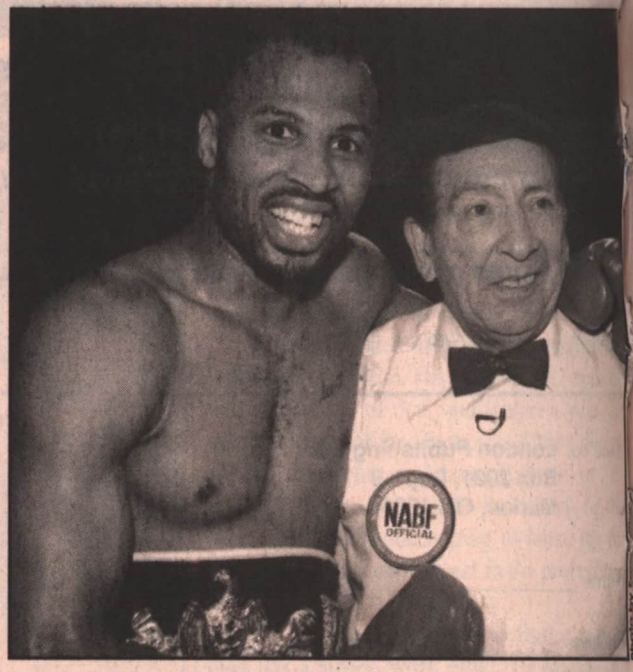


Photo by Frank Vitucci

A little bedtime Reid-ing: Junior middleweight prospect David Reid, seen here perusing a copy of THE RING, likes to catch up on the latest boxing news right before the lights go out. The Reid camp does all it can to ensure that even "The American Dream's" dreams are about boxing.



A referee is supposed to be impartial during the fight, but there's nothing wrong with picking sides afterward. One of boxing's most entertaining officials, Frank Cappuccino, poses with super middleweight contender Thomas Tate after declaring "Ice T" a TKO winner in his fight with Anwar Oshana.

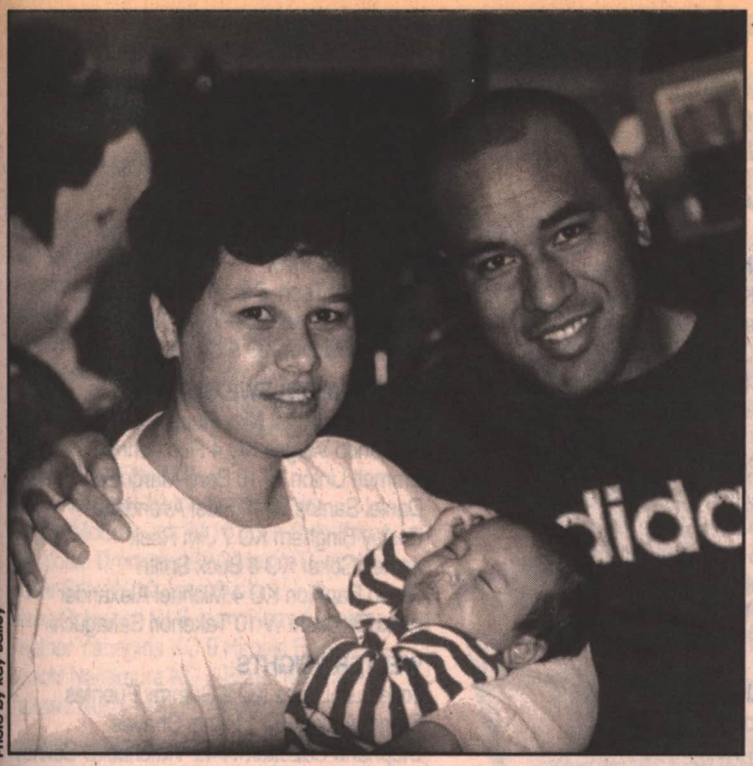


Photo by Ray Bailey

Hefty heavyweight Wolfgramm relaxes with his wife, Vanessa, and their infant child (Milligram?) the day before a fight in Atlantic City. The 1996 Olympic silver medalist from Tonga, scored a first-round knockout of Kevin Rosier the following night.

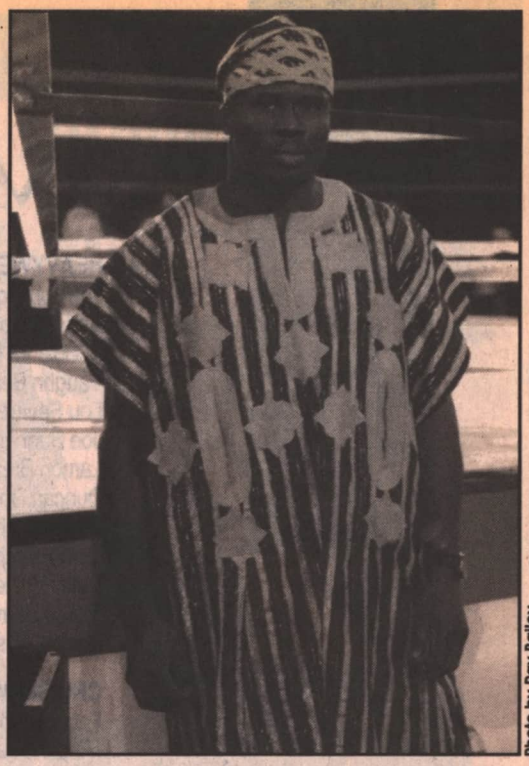


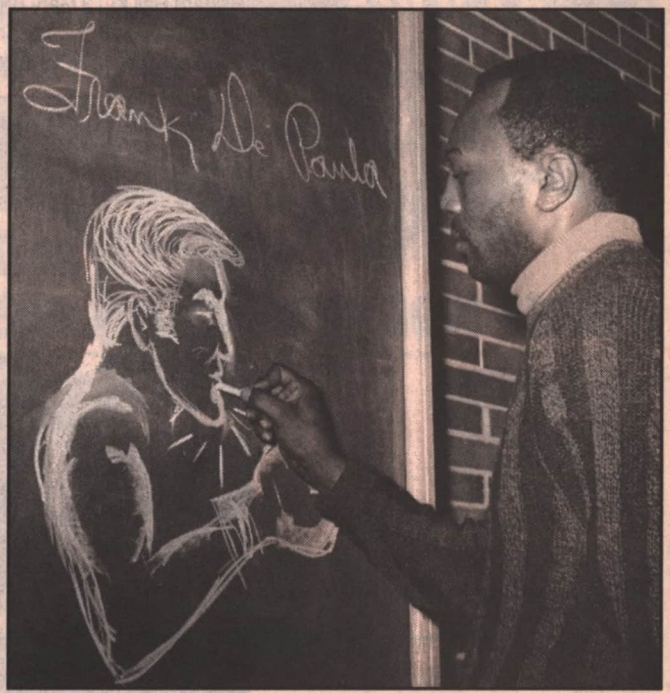
Photo by Ray Bailey

Heavyweight prospect Duncan Dokiwari pays tribute to his Nigerian roots by sporting a colorful dashiki at a fight card. The powerful 25-year-old is emerging as a potential force among the big men, having knocked out his first nine opponents in a total of 10 rounds.

Photo by Joy Lash

Just because IBF junior lightweight champion Roberto Garcia's nickname is "Grandpa" doesn't mean he can't still act like a kid by wearing boxers with the Tasmanian Devil bursting out of a smiley face. We're not sure what's on the reverse side of Garcia's shorts, but something seems to be keeping promoter Don King's attention.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



A true "knockout artist": Light heavyweight champ Bob Foster highlighted opponent Frank DePaula's questionable chin on the chalkboard a week before their 1969 title bout at Madison Square Garden. The diagram proved accurate: Hall of Famer Foster knocked out the challenger in one round.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Kirk Johnson KO 1 Eric Curry
Andrew Golota KO 3 Jack Basting
Al Cole W 10 Carlos Monroe
Vaughn Bean KO 3 Lamont Burgin
Lou Savarese KO 2 Jeff Lally
Joe Bugner W 12 Bob Mirovic
Lamon Brewster W 10 Garing Lane
Duncan Dokiwari KO 1 Otis Tisdale
Vitali Klitschko KO 2 Julius Francis
Vitali Klitschko KO 5 Dick Ryan
Peter McNeeley W 6 Dan Kosmicki
Monte Barrett W 6 Louis Monaco
Marion Wilson W 6 Wolfgramm

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Fabrice Tiozzo KO 1 Terry Ray
(Retains WBA Title)
Robert Daniels KO 10 Don Diego Poeder
Vassiliy Jirov W 12 Richard LaMontagne
Kenny Keene KO 11 Rocky Gannon
Darren Corbett KO 4 Konstantin Okhrei
Kelly Oliver KO 4 Nigel Rafferty
Jacob Mofokeng KO 5 John Keeton

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Ken Bowman KO 3 Edwin Guyton
Ray Berry W 10 Merqui Sosa
Richard Hall KO 3 Gary Ballard
David Telesco KO 1 Jay Snyder
Napoleon Tagoe KO 5 Esteban Cervantes

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Robin Reid KO 6 Graham Townsend
Giovanni Nardiello W 12 Giusseppe Ferrazzo
Norbert Nieroba W 12 Soon Botes
Omar Sheika KO 4 Toks Owoh
Markus Beyer KO 7 Yuri Epifantsev

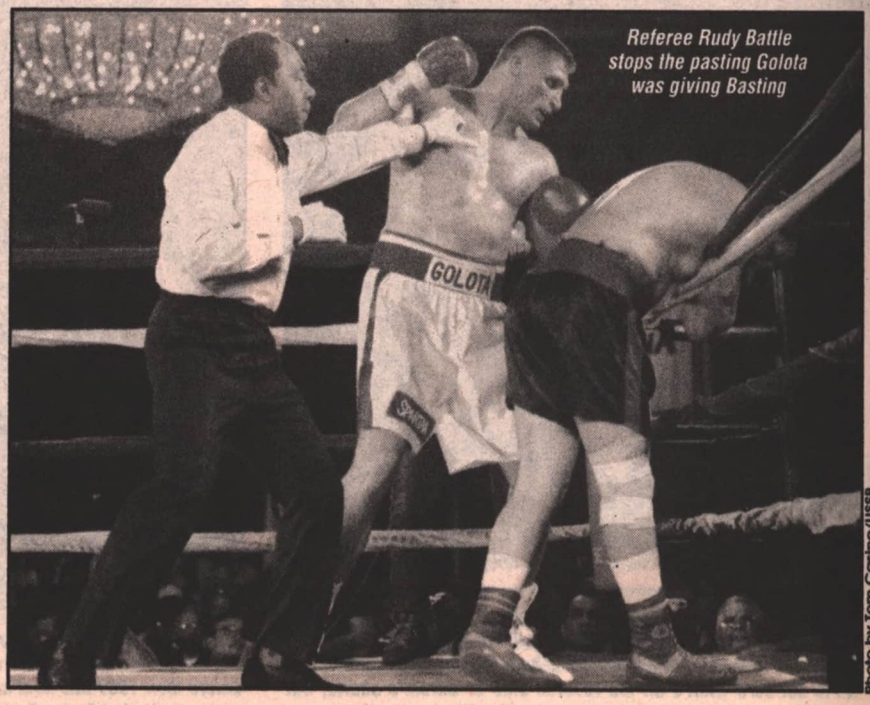
MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Hassine Cherifi W 12 Keith Holmes
(Wins WBC Title)
Otis Grant Tech. Dec. 8 Ernesto Sena
Agostino Cardamone W 12 Alexandre Zaitsev
Elvis Alexander KO 9 Curtis Bush

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
David Reid KO 2 Nick Rupa
Fernando Vargas KO 4 Ron Johnson
Emmett Linton W 10 Benji Marquez
Daniel Santos W 10 Fidel Avendano
Ensley Bingham KO 7 Jim Rock
James Coker KO 8 Buck Smith
Jason Papillion KO 4 Michael Alexander
Akira Ohigashi W 10 Takenori Sakaguchi

WELTERWEIGHTS
Jose Luis Lopez KO 2 Sammy Fuentes
Sergio Acuna KO 11 Ariel Chaves
Stephane Cazeaux W 12 Viatcheslav Barinov
Alex Lubo W 12 Juan Baldwin
Fitz Vanderpool W 12 Ron Pasek
Ohtsun Kazuki W 10 Takanasa Nada

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
James Leija KO 2 Troy Crain
Junichi Ono W 10 Hirao Asai
Ahmed Santos W 10 Billy Irwin
Hiroshi Yamakawa KO 2 Hideyki Furuhashi
Cory Spinks W 4 Antonio Gonzalez

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Shane Mosley KO 8 John-John Molina
(Retains IBF Title)



Referee Rudy Battle stops the pasting Golota was giving Basting

Photo by Tom Casino/USSB

Jean-Baptiste Mendy W 12 Orzubek Nazarov
(Wins WBA Title)
Phillip Holiday KO 6 Miguel Chavez-Tellez
Ruben Nevarez W 12 Tomas Barrientes
James Crayton KO 5 Margarito Navarro
Hiroyuki Sakamoto KO 1 Roberto Ruiz

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Genaro Hernandez W 12 Carlos Gerena
(Retains WBC Title)
Anatoly Alexandrov W 12 Julien Lorcy
Tom Johnson W 10 Javier Suzuki Diaz
Koji Matsumoto KO 6 Raffy Aladi
Ian McLeod KO 7 Patrick Gallagher
Charles Shepherd W 12 Peter Judson

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Kevin Kelley W 10 Vincent Howard
Wayne McCullough W 10 Juan Polo Perez
Nabaloum Dramane KO 3 Maxim Pougatchev
Cesar Soto W 10 Jose Ayala
Steve Robinson W 8 Jean Pierre Dibateza
Panther Yanagida KO 9 Hiroaki Fukumoto
Junichi Nakamura KO 4 Edgar Maghanoy
Takashi Koshimoto KO 4 Gary Garay

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Vuyani Bungu W 12 Ernesto Gray
(Retains IBF Title)
Erik Morales KO 2 Jose Luis Bueno
(Retains WBC Title)
Sergei Devakov KO 10 Spencer Oliver
Isaac Sentuwa KO 5 Bongchul Kim
Flavio Franco W 12 Alejandro Lopez

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Paulie Ayala KO 7 Antonio Ramirez
Adan Vargas W 12 Ancee Gedeon
Jose Rafael Sosa W 10 Wellington Vicente
Keiji Yamaguchi KO 1 Vicente Adrales
Jess Maca W 12 Masahiko Nakamura

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Satoshi Iida W 12 Hiroki Ioka
(Retains WBA Title)

FLYWEIGHTS
Chatchai Dutchboy Gym KO 5
Young Soon Chang
(Retains WBC Title)
Melchor Cob Castro KO 5 Memo Puga
Manny Pacquiao KO 1 Shin Terao
Hayato Asai W 10 Sangik Yang
Ruben Sanchez-Leon KO 8 Jose DeJesus
Carmelo Caceres W 10 Marlon Gayundato

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Mauricio Pastrana KO 4 Anis Roga
(Retains IBF Title)
Mzukisi Sikali KO 3 Mzwabantu Plaaitjies
Hidenobu Honda W 10 Ryo Kurushima

STRAWWEIGHTS
Luis Lazarte KO 9 Carlos Eluaiza
Satoru Abe KO 2 Rodel Ramila
Lolito Laroa W 10 Rocky Palma

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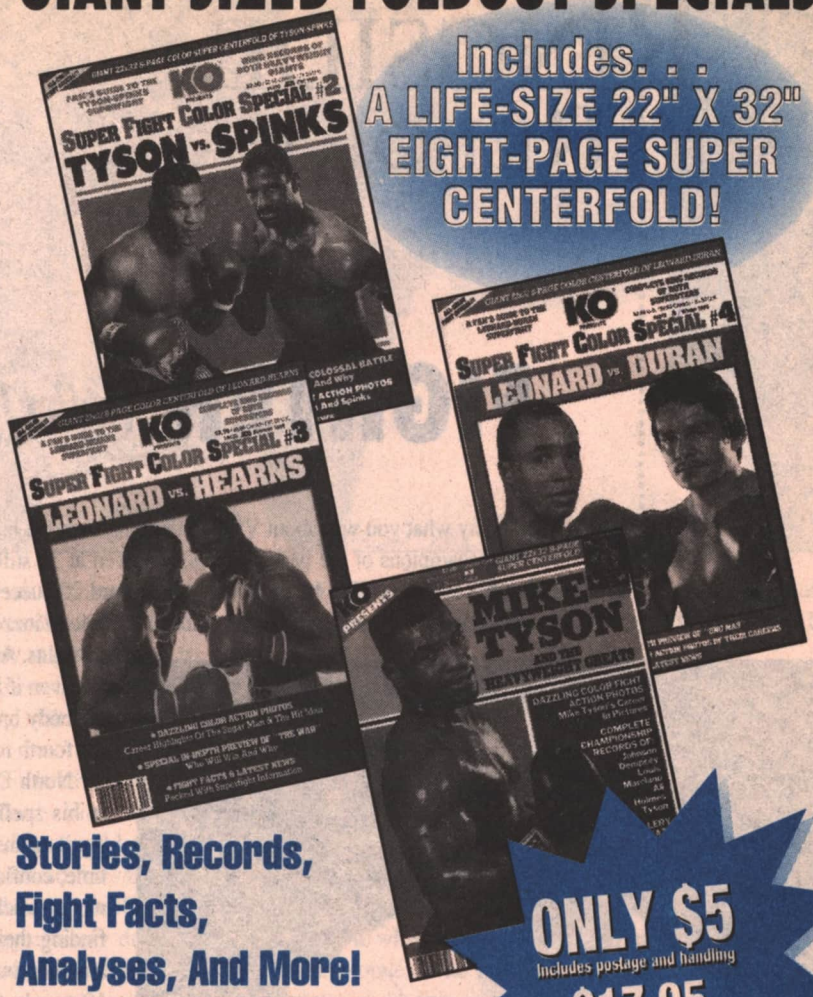

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Say what you will about Virgil Hill being over the hill, "Quicksilver" was one of the most dominant champions of the past 10 years, and even at 34 still was expected by many to last 12 rounds with Roy Jones. Hill, he of the division-record 20 successful light heavyweight title defenses, the only man ever to beat such current champions as Fabrice Tiozzo and Lou Del Valle, had never been stopped in 45 fights. And Jones made him look like a commoner.

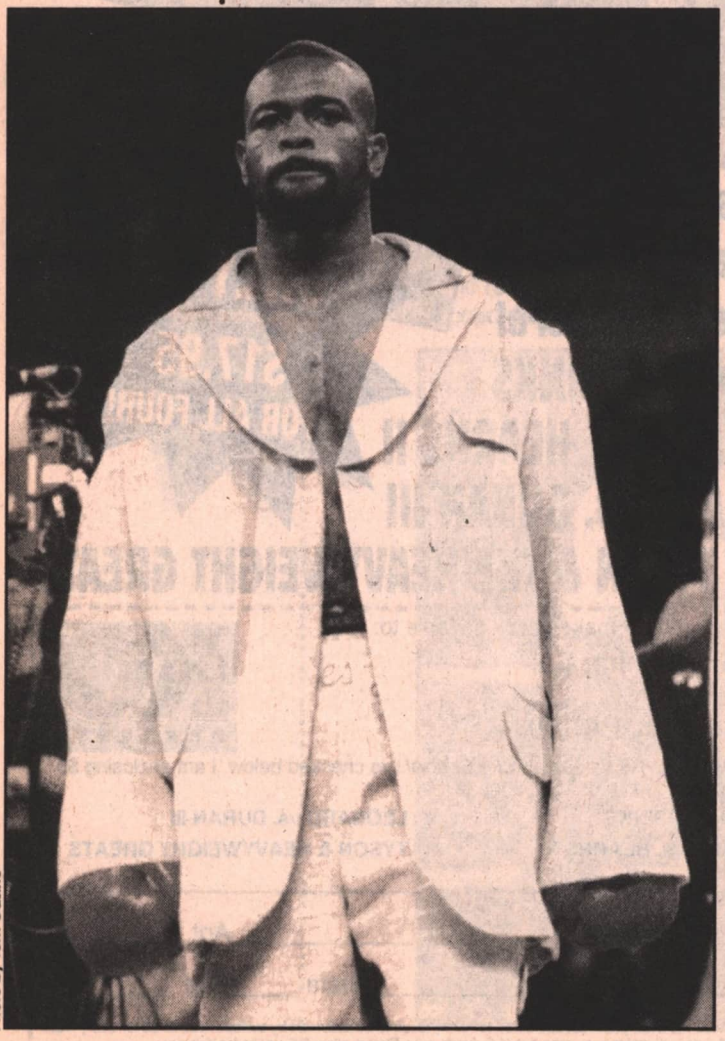


Photo by Tom Casino

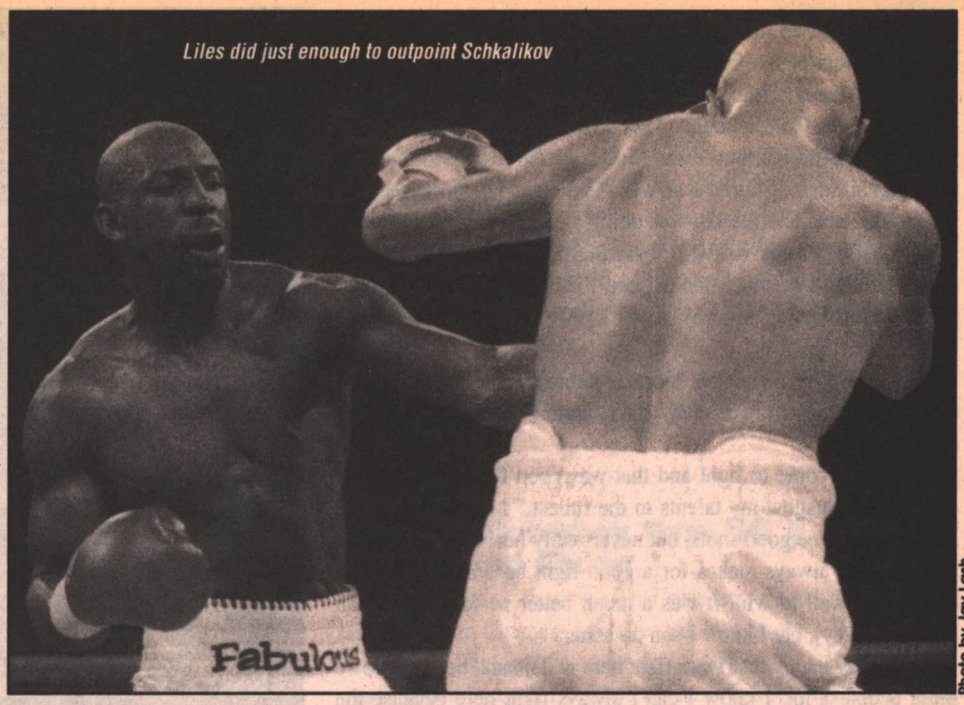
Even if it was a bit flukish that Jones' first right hand to the body broke Hill's rib and brought an end to the fight in the fourth round, you could tell it was only a matter of time for North Dakota's favorite son. Much like Felix Trinidad in his spellbinding performance earlier in the month of April against Mahenge Zulu, Jones seemed to be biding his time, confident that he could finish Hill off whenever the mood struck him. Lead lefts and quick combinations were finding their mark with ease, while Hill was afraid to do anything but jab. Hill's last 11 fights had all gone at least 10 rounds; this one barely went 10 minutes.

Jones, 36-1 (31), may fight infrequently, but he's absolutely awe-inspiring when he does step through the ropes. And the best part about this demonstration was that he showed something new, finishing it with a single bodyshot. As if the world's most gifted fighter didn't have enough weapons already.

• • • •

Roy Jones

Frankie Liles W 12 Andrei Schkalikov



Liles did just enough to outpoint Schkalikov

Photo by Jay Lash

Bayamon, Puerto Rico: Sometimes it doesn't take much to win. WBA super middleweight champion Liles turned in one of the worst performances of his career against number-one contender Schkalikov, never seriously hurting the challenger and leaving the crowd at Ruben Rodriguez Coliseum booing him at the end. Still, Liles captured a perfectly just unanimous decision in his seventh defense of the belt. The champion's physical advantages were just too much for Schkalikov to overcome, despite a game effort from the Russian challenger.

Liles, 168, Las Vegas, Nevada, boasted a 7½-inch edge in height and an eight-inch advantage in reach, and his harmless jab easily kept Schkalikov, 168, Chelyabinsk, Russia, at bay in the first round. Just as the 29-year-old Schkalikov was beginning to break through with single power shots in the second, an accidental clash of heads—caused by Schkalikov leading with his noggin—opened a cut atop the Russian's shaven dome.

Undaunted, Schkalikov kept leading with his head in the third, and his blind aggression paid immediate dividends. Liles, 33, was caught flush on the chin with a looping right that almost knocked him through the ropes, but the champion bounced forward and wisely tackled Schkalikov to avoid a knockdown. Schkalikov maintained his momentum in the fourth, aggressively ducking down and flailing away, scoring with bodyshots and forcing Liles to grab.

But Liles got his act together in the fifth, and over the next four rounds, frustrated Schkalikov with his accurate southpaw jab and defensive style. A right hook staggered the challenger early in round five, and a smattering of straight lefts by "Fabulous Frankie" allowed him to pile up the points.

Schkalikov finally got inside again in the ninth, and landed a short straight right that backed the champion up. Liles came back with a strong right hook, but Schkalikov countered with a clean left uppercut. Sensing trouble again, Liles became desperate and threw the Russian to the canvas, resulting in a point deduction from referee Waldemar Schmidt (Puerto Rico). Schkalikov built on his momentum in the 10th, forcing Liles to clutch once more after taking a fine left hook to the jaw.

With the fight virtually deadlocked, Liles' jab activity rose enough to secure the final two frames, even though Schkalikov, 29-4-1 (13), did some damage in the 11th with a right to the body followed by a right to the neck. The crowd's disapproval of Liles' performance was made apparent when the final bell rang, but winning is more important than impressing, and Liles, 32-1 (19), did just enough to secure the decision. Judge Gonzalo Riveras (Venezuela) scored the fight 115-114, Cesar Ramos (Puerto Rico) had it 115-112, and Ove Ovesen (Denmark) ruled in favor of the champion by a ridiculous score of 118-110. THE RING had Liles winning by 116-113.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(4-3-98)

Erik Morales KO 6 Remigio Daniel Molina

Tijuana, Mexico: Making another triumphant return home, the young Mexican warrior Morales retained the WBC super bantamweight title with a sixth-round TKO over challenger Molina of Argentina. Morales, who last December beat John Lowey in his first defense of the title with a less-than-stellar performance, was much better the second time around. He dominated the 27-year-old challenger for much of the fight, to the approving roar of the 5,000-plus that filled Tijuana's Municipal Auditorium. The 21-year-old Morales was much more aggressive than he had been against Lowey and showed his excellent boxing skills along with his power. He battered his game opponent in a very entertaining fight for the local fans who enjoy watching their heroes win.

Molina, 122, came out fighting from the beginning and landed a powerful left to the jaw of Morales, who stepped back after taking the blow, but came right back at the Argentine. Molina fought toe-to-toe for the first three rounds, but Morales got the better of it, landing hard lefts to the face of the challenger. By the third round, Molina had a swollen right eye that would make the rest of the contest a severe struggle for him.

Morales, 122, tried to end matters in the fourth round, as he came hard after Molina, 30-2 (12). The challenger, however, not only withstood the punishment, he landed some good shots of his own with his right hand as he alternated between southpaw and orthodox stances.

The champ seemed to take a breather in the beginning of the fifth round, but Molina pressured him so much that Morales had to

fight back. And he did so with a vengeance, landing some of the best bodyshots of the fight. After a left-right combination to the midsection, the challenger fell to his knees, but got up at the count of seven just as the bell sounded to end the round.

More determined than ever, Morales went after Molina with both hands, landing almost at will. The right landed especially well to the head and the left was doing all its damage downstairs. Even though Molina was still throwing punches, it was obvious that he couldn't go much longer, and finally, at 2:24 of the sixth, referee Guillermo "Memo" Ayon of Mexico, stepped in and stopped the fight.

The crowd went crazy as Morales jumped about the ring, celebrating his 29th win in as many fights and his 23rd victory before the final bell.

"[Molina] came to fight and that was good for me, because it allowed me to show my talents to the fullest," Morales said. "He hit me with some good shots, but never really hurt me. He came to win and that always makes for a good fight because it made me have to do well to win. It was a much better performance [than against Lowey], but I know I can do better.

"I'm very happy that I can fight here in Tijuana, because I owe these people a lot. I know I can't always fight here because the money is across the border, but I will always cherish the opportunity to defend my title here at home."

Molina was left with a very good impression of the champion.

"He's a good fighter and I think he will be a champion for a long time," the Argentine said. "I came here to give a good fight and I think I did. I couldn't see much out of my right eye at the end, so I think the fight was stopped at the right time. After all, one day the boxing will stop, but life continues."

Television: Televisa (Canal 12-local)

Promoter: Zanfer Promotions

(4-3-98)

Ricardo Jimenez

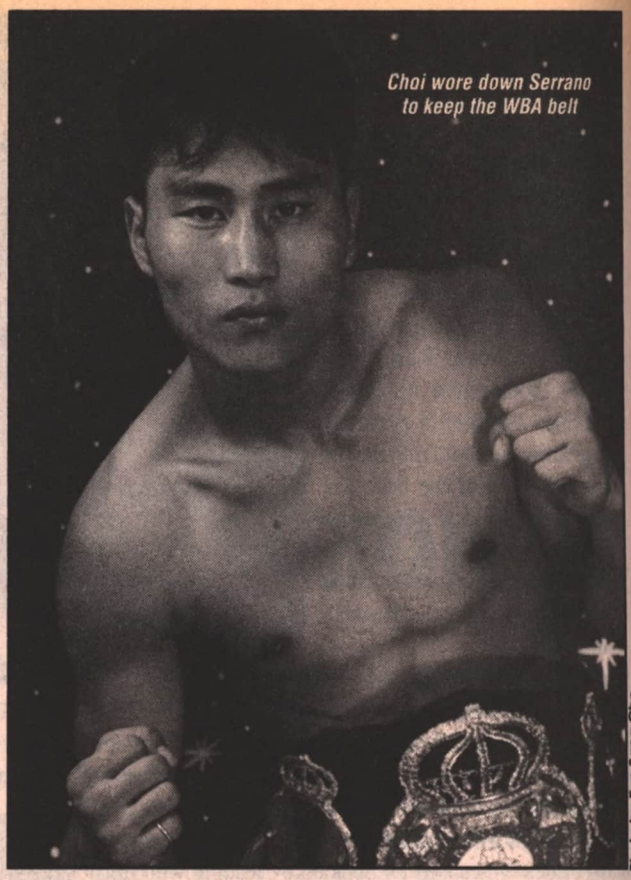
Yong Soo Choi KO 9 Gilberto Serrano

Seoul, Korea: Rugged Korean Choi, 130, had a tough time with Serrano, 130, the top contender from Venezuela, but kept stalking him and finally caught him in the ninth. Choi dropped Serrano twice in the round to gain a stoppage at the 1:10 mark and retain the WBA junior lightweight title at the Seoul Hilton Hotel.

Until that point, however, Serrano had controlled most of the fight. The scores through eight rounds reflected this, as Hector Hernandez (Mexico) and Guillermo Perez (Panama) both saw it in Serrano's favor, by 78-74 and 79-74, respectively, and Pinij Prayadsub (Thailand) had it even at 76-76. Choi, 25, raised his credentials to 24-2-1 (14). Serrano, 28, fell to 15-4-1 (13).

The upright stylist Serrano, an inch taller than Choi at 5'9", made good use of sharp, precision jabs, reddening the champ's face and taking the first three rounds with ease. Choi attempted to lead with jolting lefts, but often missed the elusive target. It was quite obvious that Serrano was a technically superior boxer.

Choi, making his seventh defense, scored looping right crosses on three occasions to take the fourth round, while Serrano kept jabbing sporadically. The Venezuelan reclaimed control with his jab in the fifth and sixth, however, as Choi was unable to get close to him.



Choi wore down Serrano to keep the WBA belt

Photo by Eun Sang Cho

It had been suggested that Serrano's defects were a suspect chin and a lack of stamina, and both played a critical role in his undoing. As Serrano became noticeably slower and less mobile in the seventh than in the earlier rounds, Choi came forward to mix it up with the fading Venezuelan. Choi landed especially well with his right uppercut in close quarters.

In the fatal ninth, Choi applied the pressure and pinned Serrano to the ropes. The Korean exploded a vicious right cross followed by a short left hook, and Serrano crashed to the deck near the ropes. He barely regained his feet, and when he did, Choi rushed in with a solid jab in the corner. This single shot sank the groggy Venezuelan. Referee Rafael Ramos (USA) called a well-timed halt to award a come-from-behind victory to the less skillful but lion-hearted champ.

Promoter: Kukdong Promotions

(4-18-98)

Joe Koizumi

Gerry Penalosa Tech. Draw 2 Joel Luna Zarate

Manila, Philippines: Lefty Filipino Penalosa, 115, retained the WBC super flyweight title on a disappointing technical draw with number-one contender Zarate, 113½, Mexico, at the Cuneta Astrodome. The fight was stopped at 2:56 of the second round. Penalosa, 39-1-2 (24), kept the title for the third time since capturing it from Japan's Hiroshi Kawashima in February 1997.

This title bout was dissatisfying on all fronts. It was postponed three times and finally took place there before a small crowd of barely 3,000 spectators. In the first round, there was little action, as the fighters cautiously probed each other. Penalosa landed a quick one-two combination to the face of the taller Mexican, the

only significant blow in the opening session. All the judges—Dick Flaherty (USA), Chuck Williams (USA), and Jaebong Kim (Korea)—gave it to the defending champ.

The second session saw Penalosa occasionally score lefts to the still cautious Zarate, 32-2-2 (25), who kept his guard high. Late in the round, the champ appealed to referee Richard Steele (USA) that there had been a headbutt. Penalosa was bleeding from a cut under the right eyebrow, and Steele ordered that the gash be examined by ringside physician Nasser Cruz. The doctor declared that it was too serious for Penalosa to go on. As the wound didn't look so severe, Steele discussed it with Cruz, but ultimately followed the doctor's advice. Since it was the mandatory defense for Penalosa, the WBC will very certainly order a rematch.

Afterward, Philippine president Fidel V. Ramos entered the ring to deliver a trophy to Penalosa. There were more than 50 people—most of whom were from the media—in the squared circle. Suddenly the canvas crashed down because of their weight, much like what occurred in Puerto Rico after the Felix Trinidad-Mahenge Zulu fight earlier in the month. Bodyguards immediately carried the president out of the ring.

Promoter: Rex Wakee Salud

(4-25-98)

Joe Koizumi

Thomas Tate KO 3 Anwar Oshana

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: With IBF super middleweight champion Charles Brewer looking on at the Blue Horizon, Tate made a convincing argument toward a title shot in the near future with a third-round TKO of previously undefeated Anwar Oshana, 167, Chicago, Illinois.

Tate, 167, Detroit, Michigan, was coming off the most impressive victory of his career, an 11th-round knockout of Joseph Kiwanuka in October 1997. Tate, 32, had been inactive since then due to cuts suffered in that fight, but was helped by his familiarity with Oshana, a former sparring partner.

Both came into the bout with well-considered fight plans. Tate, 34-5 (25), figured to keep Oshana, 20-1 (12), away with a steady jab and use angles to chop him down. Oshana, 25, felt that Tate was susceptible to bodyshots, and wanted to turn the fight into a brawl with roughhouse tactics.

In the first round, the 5'11" Tate, who had a four-inch reach advantage, peppered away at his aggressive opponent with jabs, yet Oshana burrowed his way inside to score with looping right and left hooks to the body. Oshana was connecting, but referee Frank Cappuccino (USA) chimed in midway into the round, warning Oshana about low blows and punches to the back of Tate's head.

Tate continued using his quickness to sting his rival with jabs in the second, while Oshana, a native of Syria, was warned again for hitting low. Tate, the younger brother of former IBF middleweight champion Frank Tate, nailed Oshana with a good right to the head near the end of the round.

When another blow landed below the belt in the third, Cappuccino penalized Oshana a point. This seemed to fire up Tate, who soon cornered Oshana and unleashed a torrent of clean shots to the head and body. With Oshana virtually out on his feet and trapped on the ropes, Cappuccino stepped in and stopped the fight 1:36 into the round.

"That's why I stopped going to the body, because of the warnings," Oshana explained afterward. "The ref didn't give me a chance. I didn't want to be disqualified, so I stopped going to the body."

"I know I've had a roller-coaster career," said Tate. "But give me some credit. I deserve a title shot."

Television: USA Network

Promoter: Peltz Boxing Promotions

(4-28-98)

Joe Santoliquito

Chatchai Dutchboy Gym KO 5 Young Soon Chang

Kanchanaburi, Thailand: Thai speedster Chatchai outpunched rugged Korean Chang and finally sank him for the 10-count with a vicious bodyshot at 2:54 of the fifth session in a scheduled 12. It was Chatchai's second defense of the WBC flyweight title since dethroning previously unbeaten Russian Yuri Arbachakov in Sapporo, Japan, last November.

Chang had failed in his only previous world title shot, losing a unanimous decision to the then-WBA fly champ Saen Sow Ploenchit in Thailand in January 1996. Chang fought aggressively from the start, but Chatchai made good use of his quick left hand and swift footwork. The champ kept his composure, outjabbing and outpunching the Korean challenger.

The fifth saw Chatchai turn loose and land a wicked shot to the solar plexus. Chang went down in agony and was unable to beat the count. Chatchai, 28, raised his mark to 33-1 (24). Chang, 27, coming off a 12-round decision loss to Gabriel Mira in March, fell to 21-3 (14).

(5-1-98)

Joe Koizumi

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Tate has unbeaten Oshana looking for a place to hide

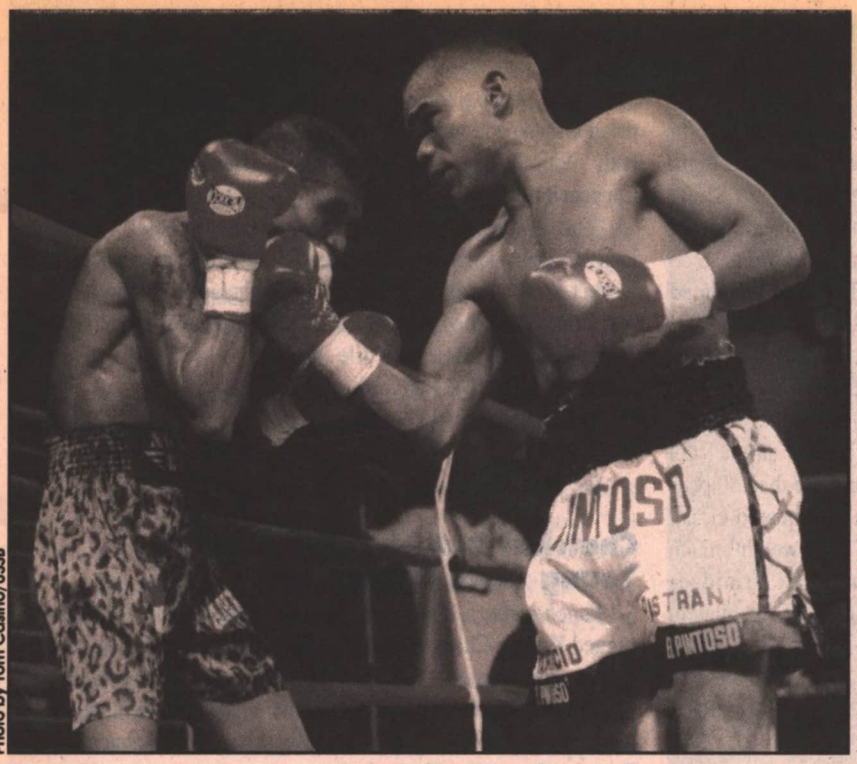


Photo by Tom Casino/USSB

Pastrana had no trouble with Roga in his first title defense

Mauricio Pastrana KO 4 Anis Roga

Fort Lauderdale, Florida: The hard-punching Pastrana had little difficulty making the first defense of his second stint as IBF junior flyweight champion. He first captured the title with a split-decision win over Michael Carbajal in January 1997, but the IBF stripped Pastrana of the belt last May when he failed to weigh in for his first defense, claiming a groin injury. The title remained vacant until the Colombian Pastrana overpowered Manuel Herrera in three rounds in Pompano Beach, Florida, last December.

Pastrana took control of this fight in the opening seconds, repeatedly landing lead right hands against Roga's head. Roga, 106½, Indonesia, was bleeding from the nose before the first three minutes of action were completed.

The reed-thin Roga has skills, but Pastrana, 108, simply outboxed him, keeping him off-balance with stinging jabs, following up with right hands to the body and head, and moving out of range before Roga could retaliate. Roga showed great courage in the face of Pastrana's withering combination punching, but he sank to his knees in the final 10 seconds of the third round as the unrelenting punishment took its inevitable toll. Roga easily beat the count, but Pastrana pummelled him until the bell. It was obvious that Roga had little left.

The Indonesian started the fourth round with good-looking combinations, but he was too weakened to continue the attack for long and, in any event, he lacked the power to keep Pastrana, 18-0 (15), at bay. Pastrana responded with a ferocious flurry, highlighted by jolting left hooks, that sent Roga to his knees once again. This time Roga, 20-4-2 (7), didn't even try to regain his feet before referee Telis Assimenios (USA) counted him out at the 1:20 mark.

"I've stopped a lot of good boxers, and anyone who gets in the ring with me has to be ready to be destroyed," said a jubilant Pastrana after the fight. "With my preparation and strength, I knew he couldn't hold on to my punches very long."

All three judges—Rocky Young (USA), Jacob Limahelu (Indonesia), and Raimundo Alcazar (Colombia)—had Pastrana ahead by 30-26 at the time of the stoppage. The fight was contested before a sparse crowd at the club Chili Pepper in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Television: U.S. Satellite Broadcasting
Promoter: Don King Productions
(4-30-98)
Ken Knox

Satoshi Iida W 12 Hiroki Ioka

Nagoya, Japan: Japanese lefty Iida, 115, barely kept the WBA junior bantam title at the Aichi Prefectural Gymnasium, as he was awarded a majority decision over compatriot Ioka, 115. It was a tough fight for the champ due to his own bleeding and Ioka's constant aggressiveness over the full 12 rounds. Armando Garcia (USA) scored it 116-111 and Fernando Viso (Venezuela) had it 115-113, both for Iida, while Masakazu Uchida (Japan) saw it 114-114. Iida, making his first defense, raised his mark to 24-1-1 (11). Ioka, a former WBA junior fly and WBC straw champ, fell to 37-7-1 (17).

It wasn't a good fight from a technical standpoint. Iida, 26, looked a bit too nervous to throw punches as smoothly as usual, while Ioka, 29, kept initiating head clashes. Since the WBC and the WBA had agreed mere days earlier to try to unify their rules and regulations, Ioka was penalized a point when Iida sustained a cut on the right eyelid caused by an accidental butt midway through the fifth.

Ioka, a lanky boxer an inch taller than the champ, fought more aggressively than usual in his quest to become the first Asian to win world titles in three different divisions. Ioka, coached by Cuban trainer Ismael Salas, turned loose and recklessly mixed with the champ in the fifth. The result of his wild aggression was a clash of heads, with Iida bleeding from the right eyelid. Referee Ken Morita (Japan) ordered the controversial deduction of one point from Ioka, and it was confirmed by the ring announcer after the round. Many supporters of Ioka from Osaka, ignorant of the WBA's new rules, loudly protested the penalty.

As the decision was announced, a riot began in the ring. Ioka's supporters rushed through the ropes and angrily protested the verdict. A fan hit Morita in the chest, saying Ioka had lost because of the point deduction. Iida's manager/promoter, Toshiro Matsuo, made the champ promptly return to the dressing room to protect him from the riot. After it ceased, Iida returned to the ring to receive a trophy.

Promoter: Midori Promotions in association with Teiken Promotions
(4-29-98)
Joe Koizumi ■

Roy Jones

(Continued from page 21)

guarantee that even if he won he would get the title shot he wants against Evander Holyfield. He told him Douglas, at nearly 240 pounds, was way too big for a guy who struggles to maintain 175. Jones listened to his father and rejected the advice of all the others around him who urged him to fight the former heavyweight champion. Jones knew they were not the ones who would take the punches and face the pain. He knew what their motivation was.

"I don't run and duck and dodge from anyone, but I do what's most beneficial for Roy," said Jones. "In this business you learn many people are in it for themselves, so you go to someone [for advice] who's concerned about you. You go to your parents because they'll tell you the truth whether you want to hear it or not.

"I like the confidence [HBO] has in me, but in boxing you've got to look at your whole career. I'm no heavyweight. Those are big guys. I seen heavyweights go out in a bad situation. I'm no fool. I'm just like you. I'm a bad fella, but I can get hurt, too.

"If I beat Buster Douglas, could HBO guarantee me a shot at Holyfield? As long as Don King got that guy, they can't. Give me in writing they can get me Holyfield, and we can talk. But if I beat Buster Douglas, and Don King says no, then what have I got? Another heavyweight to fight? I'm not going to sign with Don King. If HBO can get Holyfield, maybe it would be different, but I'm not looking to invade the heavyweight division. If opportunity knocks, I'd do it. I'm no heavyweight, but I'd go up to fight Holyfield if people want to see me fight him. I may be way too fast for Holyfield, but he *can* punch. I gotta talk with God about it, but I'd sure do it."

He would do it, one supposes, because he has decided the risk in such a match is worth the more than $10-million reward he'd likely be paid to take it. But is Douglas worth the same risk for roughly half the price? Is there any amount to make it worth risking himself against the firepower of Mike Tyson or the size of WBC champion Lennox Lewis?

Probably not. And why should there be? Jones fights for a living. To him that is risk enough no matter the opponent, because, as his trainer, Alton Merkerson, said, "You put a mouse in the ring, and he's dangerous if he's punching you."

Jones is no mouse. Neither are the men he's fought, even the least formidable of them. They are all dangerous men, plying a dangerous trade. But many around the fight game lament the fact that Jones has yet to face the formidable opponent who can take him to a level of pain and fear where all his resolve is strained. It is what Thomas Hearns meant to Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler, what Meldrick Taylor meant to Julio Cesar Chavez, what Tyson meant to Holyfield.

There was a time when some people felt that opponent would be James Toney or Bernard Hopkins, but Jones easily handled both. So the test has yet to be given. Is Jones a boxer searching for that? Does that explain his fascination with Holyfield and his moving from 160 to 168 to 175 pounds when his body didn't really demand it? Jones is the first to tell you that is nonsense. He is willing to face any reasonable challenge if the money is right by his standards, but he searches for no such defining moment, nor does he see one on the horizon. And frankly, if that's what is necessary to define greatness in boxing, he'll pass, thanks.

"I don't miss nothing," Jones said. "Look at Tommy Hearns with his nose all flat because he had Marvin Hagler. Look at Marvin Hagler. He don't even want to come back in the country because he had his opponent [Ray Leonard], and they robbed him. God knows best and God put Roy where He wants Roy to be."

Where that is, for the moment at least, is alone at the top of his weight class and several classes below that. Alone without an obvious challenger. Alone with his thoughts and his fears. Alone, just maybe, in all the world of boxing. Because of it, even though the boxing world may have grown weary of listening to him, it cannot wait for him to go to work again.

Once the first bell rings, thoughts of fear or caution disappear, and Jones becomes Bojangles in tap shoes. He is Picasso working on a wide canvas without a brush. He is Billie Holliday singing a tune. For those moments when he is actually fighting, Jones is Miles Davis on some difficult to follow but easy to appreciate jazz riff. A tortured artist suffering for his art, not in the doing, but in everything that precedes the doing.

"Roy's talent is a blessing and a curse," said HBO Sports President Seth Abraham. "He doesn't really love to fight, but he is so good at it he has to use the talent. He'd probably be happier back home in Pensacola on his ranch. But he can't ignore the talent God has given him."

Neither can anyone else, although people wonder what he will do with it next. Will he match it with Holyfield or again with Hopkins, the reigning IBF middleweight champion who talks as if he's eager to meet Jones at 168 pounds?

"Rivalries make boxing," Hopkins said recently. "We've lost that in boxing today. I think if Roy and I fought at a weight where we'd both feel comfortable, it would be a huge match, but the politics make it impossible. You get one crack at a guy, and if you lose [as Hopkins did via close decision in 1993 for the IBF middleweight title], you don't fight him again."

Jones has said he's willing to fight Hopkins, but only if he moves up and wins the 168-pound title Jones once held "to make it worth my while." Yet he seems to have no faith in Hopkins' eagerness to actually do what he says.

"Bernard Hopkins says he wants to come up and fight me at 168, but he keeps fighting middleweight," Jones pointed out. "When I said I wanted to fight James Toney, I went up to 168 and fought him. What does that tell you?"

Probably that Bernard Hopkins knows a fight with Roy Jones would not deal him a good hand. Regardless, following his rapid-fire win over Hill, Jones said he was now ready to meet WBC interim light heavyweight champion Graciano Rocchigiani, but with his usual cautionary note.

"I'm the WBC champion," Jones insisted. "He's the interim champion. I'll fight him in August or September. I haven't gone to a meeting and said '*Bam*, yes!' but we've agreed."

Thus, despite his distaste for the entire endeavor, Jones apparently sees no reason not to continue fighting, because for the moment he is the one dealing the cards and everything is coming up aces. He has a new, three-year contract extension with

HBO that paid him a $500,000 signing bonus after the Hill fight, on top of the $3.5-million purse and a $125,000 Rolls-Royce. And he has at least the possibility of one day fighting Holyfield for the biggest prize in sports. What he doesn't have is a clear path to reach the legend status his gifts seem to promise him. Between that lofty position and where he is now must come a threatening opponent. Until then, there's always his website.

"I'd considering fighting anybody who would be good for Roy Jones," he said. "If people want to see me perform, I will. God blesses you with talent, you should use it. I got a website now, so people can call and tell me who they want me to fight. Whoever gets the most calls will be who I'm looking for. But I don't see anybody who can beat me."

Other than himself, neither does anybody else. ■

Ron Borges covers boxing for the Boston Globe and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Andrew Golota

(Continued from page 23)

millions of dollars for his first title defense or preparing for a unification tilt with Evander Holyfield, Golota is trying to pick up the pieces of a once-promising career.

There was little doubt the 30-year-old product of the streets of Warsaw would find his way back into the ring. Golota had little to lose in resuming his quest for a world title. He still enjoys name recognition that few of his contemporaries can claim, thanks to his bizarre doubleheader with Bowe and his embarrassing freeze-up against Lewis. Even infamy translates into drawing power and earnings potential, as evidenced by the higher-than-usual television ratings the Dixon fight produced for the USA Network's *Tuesday Night Fights*.

The real question is whether Golota can still redeem himself, whether he can ever live up to the expectations that followed his surprising dominance of Bowe before being disqualified in their two matches, whether he has the mental stability to go along with his considerable skill and power.

Golota shook off a lot of rust against Dixon (who showed quickness and craftiness not expected from a man of such girth), but it's far too early to pass final judgment on whether the fallen contender can ever live up to his vast promise. For now, let's call him a heavyweight in recovery.

If beating Dixon helped Golota put his previous three outings behind him, he still failed to return to the form that made him a hot property. There is still a lot of work to do. Even Golota isn't ready to declare his redemption complete after just one fight, a tuneup affair at that, but he is pleased with his progress.

"I'm getting better, you know, older and better," he said in his thick Polish accent. "I feel better. I put on some weight [after the Lewis loss] and I couldn't move well, but now I came down to 240. I feel much better now, more confident."

Golota's battle with himself is actually a struggle with a two-headed monster. The tactics that earned him the nickname "Foul Pole" were part of his arsenal long before he fought Bowe, and are of constant concern to his trainers. If that weren't enough, he must also confront the emotional fragility that led to his collapse against Lewis.

When Golota bared his teeth and chomped down on the shoulder of Samson Po'uha in a troubled moment back in '95, it was dismissed as an example of the fighter's mean streak and resourcefulness. When he answered Bowe's early rabbit punches with low blows in their first fight, it looked like a perfectly justifiable case of tit-for-tat. But after he threw away certain victory by ignoring repeated warnings to keep his punches up later in that fight, it was clear Golota had a problem. And when he did it again in the return bout, he was correctly labeled a headcase. The Lewis fight ended too quickly to determine if he had overcome his propensity to hit low, so no one knew for sure if all those rounds of punching at a heavybag decorated with a pair of trunks had done any good. Lou Duva kept close watch during the Dixon fight for signs of a relapse.

"It wasn't so much the moves he made or knocking him out or anything like that," the venerable trainer said. "I think he threw one low blow. The biggest thing is he listened in the corner to Roger Bloodworth and myself. He didn't say no, he didn't nod, he didn't grunt. All he did was listen to what we told him to do."

Dixon presented a challenge Golota can expect to face again. The heavyweight from Cleveland clearly did his homework, and went out of his way to entice Golota into a foul-fest with his own dirty tricks. Dixon had two points deducted for his own conduct.

"He tried to [lure me into fouling]," Golota said. "He couldn't do anything else. It was about to piss me off, you know, but I calmed myself down and kept fighting."

Duva is aware the problem is as much mental as it is technical, something that cannot be completely cured by changing the angle of his bodypunches. Golota has shown that he will stoop to any tactic when things aren't going his way, a habit that continues to threaten his progress. He is always one disqualification away from being written off as an undisciplined brute better suited for Ultimate Fighting than professional boxing.

"He's found the answer," the trainer claimed. "The answer is not to do that again. He don't have to look for a way out. He can fight if he has to fight."

On the foul front, Golota passed his first major test. Dixon hardly presented enough of a challenge, however, to answer the questions raised by the Lewis blastout.

"When a guy gets knocked out," Duva said, "you look to see what he can do, see whether he's punch-shy or not. And he's not. I wanted to see what his mental condition was and how he came back. You can't find that out in the gym. He had his composure. He came through. I was satisfied with everything I saw out there, as far as his composure and showing me he wants to fight."

Just having his hand raised in victory did Golota a world of good. A couple of days after the fight, he was back in the gym getting ready for a May 8 fight with Jack Basting–which Golota won by easy third-round TKO–and sparring with Cuban prospect Eliecer Castillo.

"He came back to the gym and he's really snapping his jab and starting to get into his rhythm," Duva said. "When you get your rhythm back and all that, you're getting your confidence back. I think with a couple more fights, I don't care who the hell it is, we'll fight anybody at all."

The plan for the near future calls for a summer bout in Poland, the homeland he had to avoid for years before he returned to clear up criminal assault charges that had hung over him since his departure for America. Main Events, Golota's promotional company, was still trying to work out a date at press time for a bout against Tim Witherspoon, Axel Schulz, or Brian Nielson. As Duva put it, "We're looking at a couple of name-value guys."

"It's a very good possibility," Golota said of fighting professionally in Poland for the first time. "It's a chance to show people in Poland how boxing really looks like. There's not a lot of Polish heavyweight boxers. The people know me. There's one light heavyweight champion [WBO champ Dariusz Michalczewski, who fights out of Germany], but light heavyweight is not the same as heavyweight."

If others have given up on Golota, written him off as a nut case, his countrymen have not. They showed up in droves for the Dixon fight, waving their Polish flags and cheering on the former amateur star.

"It surprised me," Golota said. "The hall over there was filled out with Polish people from the New York area and even some who came from Chicago. They still believe in me. I was pretty confident to see that."

If he can make it through the early stages of his comeback without incident, Golota will continue to grow in confidence. That kind of self-assurance will be an all-important ingredient to any effort to step up to a major event. Even if he can conquer his own problems, however, Golota must also continue to progress and grow as a fighter to become a champion. He showed a rarely seen blend of speed, footwork, power, and killer instinct before his breakdowns against Bowe, but has not consistently improved on that form.

Golota, 30-3 (27), has the tools to contend with any threat, but they must be continually refined. He still often reverts to the stand-up European amateur style he brought with him from Poland, but has an alter-ego that wants to bang and brawl, pro-style, at close quarters.

"He's got the best legs in heavyweight boxing," Duva bragged. "He can move. When he wants to move and slide and all that, he can do it as well as anybody out there. The thing is, you've got to keep teaching him and teaching him and teaching him. He falls into where he goes back to that European style. He stands too rigid. Right now, the best thing is to loosen him up."

That was the game plan prescribed against Lewis. Duva said Golota was instructed to stick and move and rely on his footwork for the first three rounds to offset Lewis' aggression. Instead, Golota stood directly in front of the WBC champion and made himself a target for right-hand bombs.

"He was so tight," Duva said, "I don't know if he knew he was in a fight or not."

Fans won't soon forget that panic-stricken look on Golota's face after rising from the canvas when Lewis scored an early knockdown. How much damage remains beneath the surface is an unknown at this point. Only time will tell if Golota can earn his redemption, but he's off to a solid start. He's well ahead of Mike Tyson, Oliver McCall, and Henry Akinwande, his fellow disgraced heavyweights, in terms of regaining credibility with the public. Golota said he wants to put a fresh coat of paint on his image and put the past behind him. The only way to do that, of course, is to get back into the title picture and win a championship. He sees a bright future just beyond the horizon.

"It's not that far," he said. "I improve myself and show everybody else and me I can fight. I feel right, confident and ready. I didn't fight at all last year. I lost last year. I can't even consider the last meeting with Lewis as a fight. There wasn't any fight. That wasn't Andrew Golota in that fight. It wasn't me."

Golota is not in denial. He understands his sins and is eager to make up for them. That, at least, is a start. After all, the first step to recovery is admitting the problem.■

Naseem Hamed

(Continued from page 26)

It's also important to always be in a punching position. Make Hamed think you're not ready by moving your back foot back, but keep most of the weight on your front foot. Try to lure Hamed to jump in with those leaping punches, and be ready. I tell my fighters it's just like you're testing the water in the pool. You're not shifting your weight. You can put that back foot down and throw a punch right away. That's one of the tricks. You just want to throw some illusions and lies at him.

Hamed is depending on you not being offensively set. I would be ready to punch and step in with straight right hands. Vazquez almost hit him with one. Vazquez was a good enough veteran to pick that up and actually staggered him once. The problem was he didn't put a second punch with it, and Hamed was able to handle it.

I'd want to have a guy who's a real steady guy mentally, a guy who wouldn't be conned. I would speak very highly to my guy about not being conned, making Hamed believe he's more elusive than he really is, that he's doing it with mirrors, that he's pulling back in a vulnerable way. My guy doesn't have a defensive wizard in front of him. If he controls himself, he'll be able to see the vulnerabilities instead of getting caught up in the things Hamed wants you to get caught up in.

LOU DUVA

You gotta make sure your fighter's got a good chin, because if he has a good chin, that's half the battle. And he has to be able to put the pressure on. He has to fight the style of a Joe Frazier or Rocky Marciano. You gotta keep turning. You can't just walk in. But one of the most important things you can do to Hamed is step on his feet. It would slow him down. He'd get erratic and it would get him to fight your fight.

A lot of it is show. He has the style of a Hector Camacho or a Muhammad Ali. If you watch his antics, you give away the fight. The trainer's gotta do a lot of teaching and pad work to get ready for a fight like that. When you're fighting a showboat, you gotta be able to make different moves to counter his theatrics. You're going to have to get a couple different styles, pressure him until he runs.

You have to motivate your fighter to the point where he doesn't buy into Hamed's act. Make it known to him what to expect, but also make it known to him that he has to make Hamed fight your fight. You have to motivate him that night going down the aisle, you have to make him understand what's going on. You can train three months for a fight, and then, all

(Continued on page 73)

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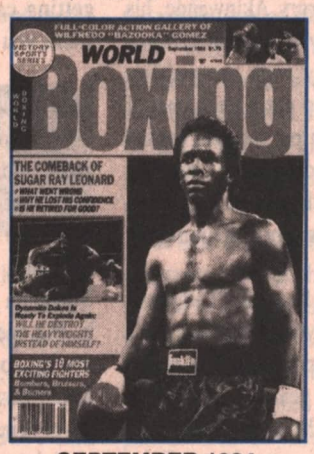

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Naseem Hamed

(Continued from page 69)

a sudden, the guy forgets everything just taking those steps to the ring and listening to the crowd. He starts thinking to himself, *Wow! I've never been in a spot like this here*, and he freezes up.

I think Hamed can be beat. He doesn't have the strongest chin, but you have to make him fight you. You cannot let him showboat. Kevin Kelley had the right fight plan, but then he got away from it and tried to take him out with one punch. There's a lot of aggressive guys who can beat Hamed, guys like Arturo Gatti. He gets in, gets close, and makes you fight his fight. And Gatti can punch. You gotta be aggressive, and you gotta give him angles. If you don't go into this fight with a fight plan, and then you stay outside and potshot, it's going to be a matter of your chin against his fists.

RICHIE GIACHETTI

One thing is you have to take away his cockiness. You have to take charge of the fight. The thing is, he's the bully right now, and he's talking the talk, like Ike Quartey was talking the talk when he was beating everybody. Then Quartey goes the distance with a guy like Jose Luis Lopez, and now he'll lose inside four or five rounds.

The Arab, he's fast, he's cocky, and he can punch. And that punch gets him out of trouble. You can't let him get off first. You have to beat him to the punch and take charge of the fight. You gotta break his spirit first, just like a good racehorse. The better he does as the fight goes on, the better he gets. Take that away from him.

You have to have somebody who has the tools and is not intimidated by him—a fighter like Julio Cesar Chavez, Tommy Hearns, Aaron Pryor. An ordinary fighter can't beat the Arab. You have to be strong in the mind. He does a lot of clowning. Later on, that's going to be his downfall. He's too cocky right now. He's going to defeat himself. He's somebody who's talking too much. I don't think his trainer has control over him.

When it comes down to it, he's not great. Look at the competition he's beaten. Once he steps up in class, it'll be a different story. I think he hasn't come up against the competition yet. He's had nobody in the opposite corner or a top trainer to go against. You have to have the talent to execute what the trainer's game plan is. When you become great is when you beat a great fighter in his prime. That's when a great fighter is made, not when you fight a lot of good fights.

He hasn't come up against the baddest guy yet. He's good, but he's taking on the older fighters who have the mental mind to beat him, but don't have the physical tools anymore. When we took Larry Holmes in against Mike Tyson, I thought Larry could beat him. But we were defeated mentally, not physically. Larry was looking for the payday. Larry's been retiring for the past 15 years, and with that mentality you're beaten before you get into the ring.

I can train a fighter to beat Hamed. I'll tell you a story Cus D'Amato told Mike Tyson during his formative years. He said, "I'm not concerned about you fighting Larry Holmes. I'm concerned about Richie Giachetti."

EDDIE MUSTAFA MUHAMMAD

There's nothing strange about the way Hamed fights. He's a great counterpuncher when you lead. If you let him counter you, he'll knock your brains out.

The way to beat him is to let him lead. You have to do a lot of feinting in order for him to lead. That's the main thing. When he leads, you counterpunch. But you have to keep a jab in his face, double and triple up, and then feint him. When he leads, he leaves himself wide open. His chin is up in the air and his hands are down. There's no mystique big enough that a good trainer can't pick out his problems. There's no big secret about his style of fighting. You have to have a game plan and execute the game plan. I believe in my ability to pick a fighter apart.

You have to have a young, strong opponent, keep a jab in Hamed's face, and get him to lead. My fighter would have to be strong mentally and physically. He would have to be able to take a punch.

Hamed is a devastating puncher, there's no question, when he has leverage. He does everything wrong, but it turns out right. He reminds me of Muhammad Ali. He gets away with it because he's so quick. Speed. Your hands have to be up at all times, and the jab is the basic punch in negating that speed.

You have to just block Hamed's elaborate ring walks out. That's nothing. People let that get to them. That should be the least of your problems. You just get into the ring, warm up, chat with your trainer about world events or something, and wait for Hamed to get into the ring.

He's a great fighter; you can't take that away from him. His belief in God is his strength, so it's going to be hard to beat that kid. He's a strong Muslim, and I'm a strong Muslim. I know you can't break that kid's spirit. It will never happen. He can punch, and he brings them from such awkward angles. But if I had the right guy, I know it could be done.

EMANUEL STEWARD

You have to put relentless pressure on him and don't get caught up in his mind games. Always use a lot of feints and a lot of pressure. You have to be very aggressive, but always maintain perfect balance. Run around, cut him off, but always have balance. Force him to punch and then counterpunch. Don't get careless. It's very simple.

He has a total lack of fundamentals and basics. He's very vulnerable. If he throws a punch, and you have perfect position, you can counterpunch. Much of the time his opponents are out of position.

A lot of guys get wrapped up in the mind games, but you have to fight him like you would a normal person. A big part of his game is show. But the whole key is balance. You can't be lunging. If you're off-balance, too, he can get away with it. He's really not that difficult of a fighter if you know what you're doing. ■

Tim Graham covers boxing for the Las Vegas Sun and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Fred Norwood

(Continued from page 43)

Norwood's entire life has been spent absorbing low blows, harnessing his anger, and hitting back. Just days after his 17th birthday, Norwood's mother kicked him out of the house, leaving the direc-

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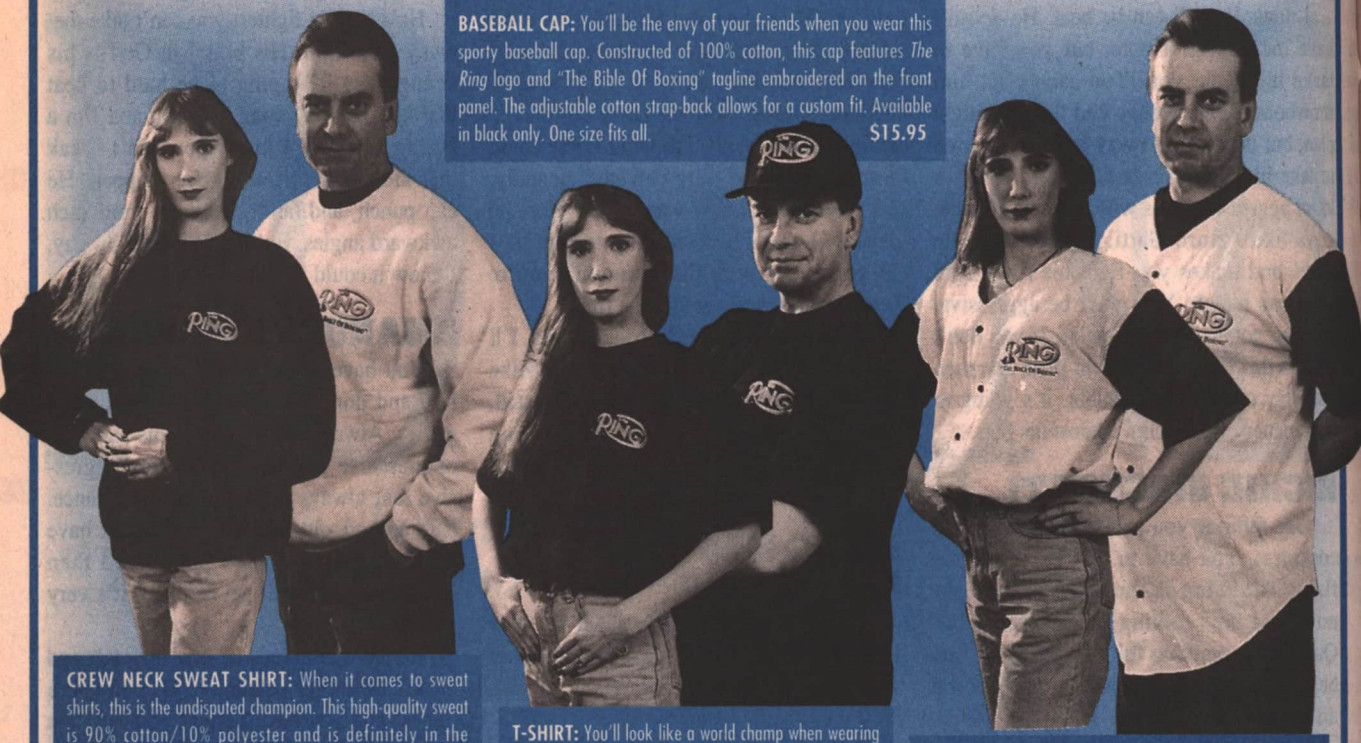

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Fred Norwood

(Continued from page 73)

tionless street tough without a home or a family. But Norwood was fortunate enough to be taken in by Charles and Geraldine Hamm, who saved his life and then turned it around by getting him involved in boxing. Charles, who owned the Northside Bombers Gym in St. Louis, convinced Norwood that fighting in the gym made a lot more sense than fighting on the streets. Norwood turned out to have a gift for the sport, and he racked up an 86-4 amateur record, including a runner-up finish at the 1989 National Golden Gloves. It never escapes Norwood's mind how much of his success he owes to the Hamms.

"They've done so much for me, when I didn't have nobody," Norwood said. "I got kicked out of my house, I couldn't live with my fiancee [now his wife] because she was living with her parents, and this guy, he did everything he could do. All those dimes and nickels he gave me—they really added up."

But while the Hamms were a tremendous positive influence on Norwood, negative situations continued to arise. Geraldine died in June '97 of bone cancer, providing additional fuel for Norwood's perpetual anger at the world. And his career wasn't going much better. Norwood scored what should have been a career-altering win, an eight-round unanimous decision in '92 over now-IBF junior featherweight champion Vuyani Bungu, for which Norwood flew to Italy to play the role of "opponent." But the win didn't change anything for Norwood, as two-division former champion Donald Curry, his manager, couldn't secure him any big fights. Norwood left Curry a few months later, and shuffled around from one meaningless fight to the next until he aligned with Dunkin and Top Rank in November '96. And since then, the pieces have fallen into place.

For someone with a reputation for being generally indignant, Norwood has been extremely upbeat and talkative lately. Much of that can be attributed to the thrill of winning the title not having worn off yet, but it also had a little something to do with him having just signed the contract for his first title defense, an ABC-televised showdown on June 13 against top-contender Genaro Rios in Atlantic City. Norwood predicted Rios, best known for the robbery he suffered last year against Vazquez after dominating the defending champion for 12 rounds, would go the way of Cermeno and everybody else on his 29-0-1 (18) ledger. (The one blemish was a one-round technical draw in 1993 caused by an accidental headbutt.)

And after the Rios fight, what does Norwood want most? The same thing everybody from 122 to 130 pounds wants: Hamed. Top Rank honcho Bob Arum took out an ad in a London newspaper shortly after Norwood's title victory in an effort to goad Hamed, as well as create interest in a fight between the WBA champ with a reputation for getting angry and the dancing destroyer with a knack for making others angry. So what does Norwood think of Hamed?

"This guy's a character," Li'l Hagler said. "He's a good fighter, but the guys he's beaten have had better days behind them. I've got a goal, a destiny. I don't like to talk about what I'm going to do, so just watch with your two eyes, see for yourself. I've got something for Naseem Hamed that nobody ever gave him."

Based on the Cermeno fight, Adams knows that's not an empty boast. "Freddie took the title fight on short notice and was winded by the sixth round, but he never quit," the trainer said. "He followed the game plan, to get past his reach and put the pressure on, and he was so absorbed in what he was doing, he almost went to the other corner between rounds at one point. He did enough to easily win a decision against a Venezuelan for a WBA title [the WBA is based out of Venezuela], so I had to be pleased.

"He needs to learn to start a little earlier, but other than that he has all the good tools. He'll be able to show a lot more when he has full time to prepare. I think he'd really give Hamed problems. He can bend low and make Hamed miss, give him a taste of his own medicine. Plus he's left-handed. I've been studying what it takes to beat Hamed, and I think Freddie could do it."

Not everyone is so confident that Norwood could be the man to knock The Prince off his throne. Daryl Pinckney, a journeyman best known for scoring an upset knockout of Jones in '94, lost a 10-round unanimous decision to Norwood last year, but doesn't think Li'l Hagler would have a chance against Hamed.

"He's very skillful and, the way boxing is now, with guys picking all their opponents, he can stay on top for a long time," Pinckney said of Norwood, "but he's no Marvin Hagler. He gets carried away with what he's doing, feels he can take whatever you can give him, and that could get him into trouble. Plus, I don't think he's much of a puncher. Him and Hamed wouldn't be a very exciting fight, and Hamed would definitely beat him."

Col. Bob Sheridan, the blow-by-blow commentator for USSB, which televised the Cermeno fight, was thoroughly impressed by Norwood's performance. But he wasn't so impressed as to believe Norwood could beat the featherweight division's top star.

"Cermeno's a good fighter, but he got totally dominated," Sheridan said. "I had Norwood winning every single round. He's really a complete fighter. But Hamed is so strong, I don't know if Norwood could upset him. Naseem Hamed's power and awkward style would just be too much for him."

A fight with Hamed would obviously be Norwood's dream fight in terms of money and exposure, but he also has a boxing dream that means more to him on a personal level. Charles Hamm refuses to board an airplane, so he was unable to be ringside in Puerto Rico to watch Norwood capture the title. Norwood wants to thank Hamm for all he's done by bringing the belt home to St. Louis and defending it in front of a hometown crowd that includes his "Pop." Also in attendance for such a fight would be Norwood's wife, Tarcia, and their daughters, Aunje, 8, and Brunje, 5. And Norwood's first son was expected to arrive in June.

"My wife named both of our daughters," Norwood said, "but my son, I'm gonna name him. But I tell you right now, boxing will *not* happen for him, because he's not going to need it like I do. Once I've made my money, and once I've unified all the titles to become the undisputed champion like my idol, Hagler, I'm getting out. And I'm just going to relax with my wife and kids and be happy." ■

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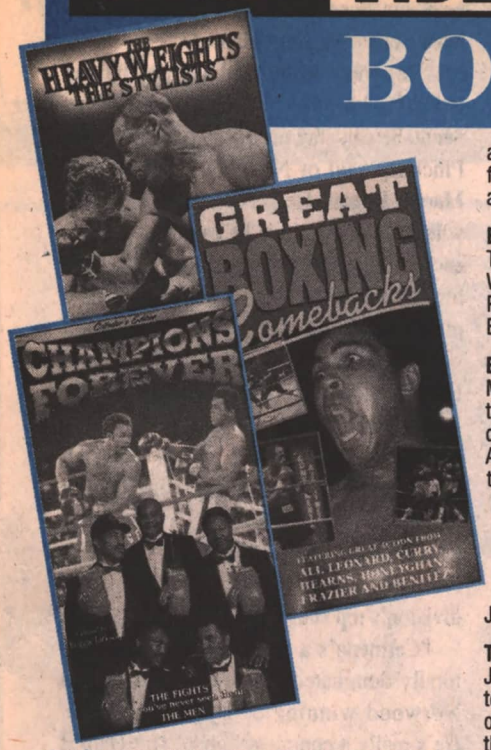

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John Tate

(Continued from page 47)

would be much busier. Even though we lost the fight [by seventh-round knockout], he helped prepare us well for it."

Phaar also firmly believed that Tate was not as punch-drunk as most people thought, and that his limited communication skills came more from his lack of education and thick drawl than anything else.

"One-on-one, you could have a pretty good conversation with John," Phaar said. "He had a wisdom about things that surprised me sometimes. He had no formalized religion, but one of his goals had been to go to Bible school to become a minister after he had become champion. He still thought about it a lot, but just couldn't separate himself from his old self. Another thing I found interesting was the fact that wearing his dirty, smelly clothes in Knoxville didn't seem to bother him on the local level, but when we went to Uncasville he insisted on having new warm-ups and athletic outfits. It was like he wanted to make a good impression with new people."

"Kerry Phaar made the final stab to get John back on the right track," said Kent. "Around him, John played it straight. But the last few weeks it seemed like he was back to his old ways."

Sadly, after the McKnight fight, Phaar saw less and less of Tate, and it was presumed that he had drifted back to his former ways. One person who disagrees with that assessment is John Davis, who along with his wife, Pilar, owns the Express Mart on Martin Luther King Drive in Knoxville, where Tate often stocked shelves. He worked there until 10 p.m. on April 8, approximately five hours before his death. Davis had boxed in the Golden Gloves with Tate, and considered him a great friend and a fine man.

"Even with all that happened, John was a well-liked ambassador with the wealthy and poor alike," he said. "I've known him for over 20 years and never saw him under the influence. I don't think he was as frequent a drug user as has been published. It has been blown of proportion. John ate here at the deli regularly. We had an open and outgoing relationship. He was polite and social, and would give you the shirt off his back. That is how he should be remembered."

Roach has equally fond memories of the beleaguered champion. "John used to come in and watch the *Tuesday Night Fights*, and was always great to me," he said. "One time he even brought Frankie Randall here with him. I always heard he was under the thumb of drugs, but most of the time he seemed clear-eyed to me. After the McKnight fight, he left his second's license at the bar. When he came back, and I tried to give it to him, he told me to keep it as a souvenir. His clothes always smelled, and he was a bum for lack of a better word, but he was a kind man."

Roach described being depressed one night over a girlfriend who broke up with him. Tate mistook his depression for anger, and asked if he was mad at him. When Roach said he had "girl trouble," Tate took him aside and told him a tale about a man who asked God for a woman and was granted his wish. Eventually, she cheated on him, and the heartbroken man asked God why he let that happen after granting him a woman he could cherish. God responded that the man was supposed to love and cherish the woman, but "never worship her above me."

Ironically, it was the worship of a woman that many say was one of the factors that led Tate to ruin. Her name was Claudia and she was a college-educated Californian whom he married around 1980 after a short courtship. Miller said she was cultured, and not only broke his heart, but also was responsible for a major rift in the boxer/manager relationship. Tate started training for the Weaver fight at over 280 pounds, even though he weighed a well-proportioned 240 when he beat Coetzee. Unbeknownst to Miller, Claudia had put him on the Scarsdale Diet, which precluded him from eating carbohydrates.

While training for Berbick, he was taking Claudia's dietary advice instead of Miller's. In addition, Tate was taking medication for a vertebra injury. Tate rarely took his medication with food, as prescribed, or at regular intervals as he was instructed. To make matters worse, once he arrived in Montreal for the Berbick fight, he headed straight for a favorite chicken shack that he had frequented during his days as a 1976 Olympian. Within hours, he was suffering from extreme diarrhea. Sparring partner Walter Santemore was pushing the sluggish Tate around in the gym, and Miller was ready to pull him out of the fight.

"We wound up in a big argument, and that was when I found out about the Scarsdale Diet," said Miller. "I went bananas. John had a habit of listening to everybody but the people who knew what was best for him. We had warned him about outside influences."

There were troubles in the marriage that caused frequent arguments. According to Miller, if Tate got mad "he was mad forever." He also said that Claudia often came to him after an argument "scared to death," although there was no evidence that Tate beat her. Moreover, Claudia had cultural ideals and wanted her family to be included more in their relationship. A few years after getting married, they were divorced. Tate was devastated.

"He was deeply in love with her, and in my opinion, never stopped loving her," said Miller. "I think that loss of love destroyed him. After she left him, he couldn't do anything. I drove by him in training camp one day, and he was sitting near a tree with his head in his hands. He would have sat there forever if he could have. Then he would stay in the house for three or four days at a time. To the day he died, I think he loved her deeply."

After Tate's death, Miller said Claudia made several phone inquiries to his gym, but would not leave her phone number.

Miller, 59, met Tate while he was competing at the 1975 National Golden Gloves tournament in Knoxville. Miller ran a local gym, and immediately sized Tate up as a future champion. Under his tutelage, Tate garnered a bronze medal at the Montreal Olympics the following year, then won the WBA heavyweight title three years after that. For several years, Tate lived in Miller's home with Miller's wife, Diana, and three children, all of whom considered him a member of the family.

"We were inseparable," said Miller. "People said we thought with the same brain. I saw John go from the top of the

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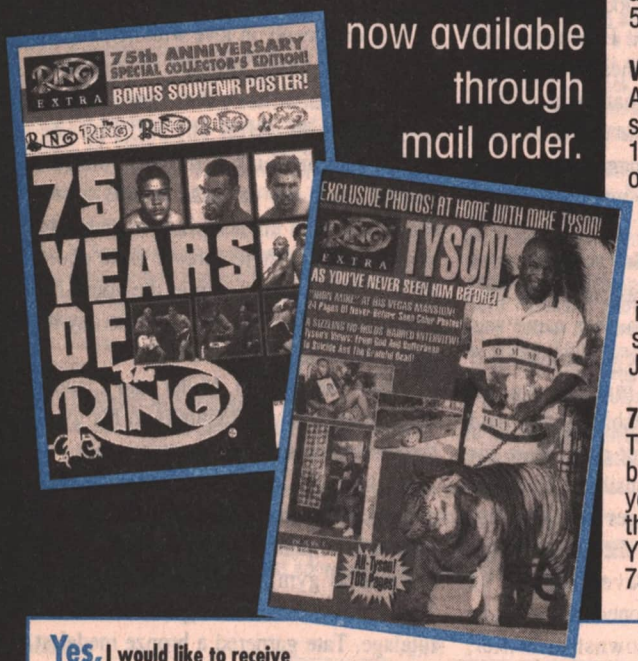

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John Tate

(Continued from page 77)

mountain to rock bottom. It was not pretty to watch, but John started to get loud with me if I criticized him. Several times I just walked out of the gym. I couldn't get him to do anything. I always said he could only beat himself, and that is what happened. He ate himself out of the title, the same as Riddick Bowe did." Miller's professional relationship with Tate ended in 1985.

Not much is known about the early days of Big John's life. He was born dirt-poor in West Memphis, Arkansas, in 1955, but his actual birth date is in dispute. From early on, Tate was no stranger to hard work, and he spent his teenage years picking cotton in the South and apples in upstate New York. He grew to be 6'4" tall. A natural athlete, he got into boxing more by chance than anything else. Success came easily to him, and when he found himself in the Knoxville tournament, he asked his opponent how he had learned to box. The opponent pointed to Miller, and their relationship was spawned.

When the penniless Tate returned to Knoxville a short time later on a Greyhound bus, Miller was the first person he called. Ironically, even though their relationship had basically ended 13 years earlier, Miller was the first person contacted by authorities trying to track Tate's next of kin when he died. Miller was unable to help them, although published reports indicated that Tate's mother lives in Detroit, and he has a daughter who lives in West Memphis.

Miller said he still has some great memories of his relationship with Tate, but that he had been waiting to get the death call for years. The ex-fighter was no longer the happy-go-lucky fellow who once told writer George Vecsey for an article in the May '81 issue of THE RING, "Knoxville is not too fast for me, it's just right for John Tate. I've lived in big cities where you need tokens to get on the subway and you've got to know what street to get off. Here I can ride my 10-speed bike. These people are different. I'm a quiet man. I'm not a person who makes the news. I'm not downing my own race, you understand, but there are people that think I'm too easygoing, too mild. I don't do a lot of bad things. Knoxville is my kind of town."

Knoxville hasn't changed much since then, but Tate sure did. He immersed himself in the drug culture while on the streets, and gorged himself on food while in prison. When last released in 1993, he weighed 417 pounds and once joked with Phaar that he "knocked out more people on the prison chow line than he ever did in a fight." At the time of his death, he was 325 pounds. Although Miller had minimal contact with him in recent years, he was forever hearing rumors about what was happening in his life.

Several months ago, 10 to 12 kids reportedly beat Tate up badly in a pool hall. There were allegations that Tate, who could become mean-spirited when high, was slapping around drug dealers and taking their money.

"In the last few weeks people were saying they didn't like Big John, and I was told people were thinking of wasting him," said Miller. "John could be a scary guy. If he hit you, there was a lot of thunder. These kids are all carrying guns today, and you would need a gun to kill him in a streetfight. To be honest, I'm surprised he lasted as long as he did."

After leaving the Express Mart on the last night of his life, Tate visited Roach, who gave him a heaping portion of chicken wings and french fries. Roach admonished him for not showing up the week before when he was supposed to accompany him and a friend to a boxing show in Cherokee, North Carolina. They had bought him a ticket and were eagerly looking forward to his company. Tate thanked him for the food, flashed that big, friendly smile, and walked into the night at about 1:30 a.m. Two hours later he was dead.

Former heavyweight champion Joe Frazier once described Tate as a man-child, and perhaps there is no better description of him. As simple as he was however, there were complexities. Whether he realized it or not, his life will forever have historical significance. He might be a relatively anonymous heavyweight champion to most, but to the black people of South Africa, he was their Joe Louis. When asked what the highlights of his life were and whether or not he was saddled with the overwhelming weight of daily regret, he took a deep drag on a Kool cigarette, flashed that ingratiating smile, held back a tear or two, and said, "They got nothing to do with fighting. They are of going to Children's Hospital [in Knoxville] and seeing all those kids that needed help. They all looked up to me. I was the champ. Nowadays we got kids dying from diseases and killing themselves over gang colors. When I was world champion, they looked up to me, listened to me. I could have made a difference, saved some lives. Being a world champion goes a long way."

Big John walked away, and you could tell he was pleased with the way his words seemed to flow so easily. He also seemed elated that somebody not only recognized him, but seemed genuinely interested in what he had to say. A few seconds later, he called back and asked this writer to please not mention anything about the cigarettes he was smoking. "There are still a lot of kids that might look up to me," he said. "I wouldn't want to set a bad example." ■

Robert Mladinich is a freelance writer based in New York City and a regular contributor to this magazine.

Florentino Fernandez

(Continued from page 55)

count of nine, but it didn't matter; he was through for the night. After Fernandez landed several punches without a return, the referee stopped the fight. It was the only time Torres was ever stopped.

Fernandez became a big favorite with the Puerto Rican fans, fighting six times in San Juan. He always drew large crowds. One of those fights, his third against Rivero in 1964, Fernandez considers his best. "We just kept hitting each other for 10 rounds," he recalled. "The fans loved it."

Fernandez' impressive victory over Torres turned out to be the climax of his career. Although he would fight for another four years, eventually growing into a light heavyweight, by the mid-1960s he was past his prime as a fighter.

Consecutive losses to Jose Gonzalez (L 10), Jimmy Lester (KO by 2), and Andy Heilman (L 10) finished him as a contender. From 1965 to '67, Fernandez had only 11 fights. He won four by kayo, but was himself knocked out four times. After being stopped by Lou Gutierrez in Miami Beach on April 18, 1967, Fernandez retired. But like most fighters, he could not stay away, and two years later he was back in the ring.

The last thing to leave a fighter is his punch, and Fernandez could still flatten anyone he could hit solidly. He knocked out six of seven second-rate opponents on the comeback trail and then finally hung up his gloves permanently, in 1972, at the age of 36. He ended his career with a record of 49-16 (41).

Soon after he retired, Fernandez began working for Dade County, Florida, as a recreational counselor and boxing instructor. He no longer works for the county, but still trains fighters on his own time.

When asked if his bruised and abused left fist hurts him today, Fernandez smiled good-naturedly and responded that it feels fine since "I don't hit anybody anymore."

Looking back on his fine career, Fernandez acknowledged that he did have one regret, that he didn't accomplish everything he wanted to. "I would have liked to have had another title bout [against Fullmer], because I felt the decision was stolen from me and I never reaped the benefits of being a champion."

Although he never did get a second chance at the title, Fernandez was a special fighter in his own right. These are the facts: From 1959 to 1964, during the waning years of the Golden Age of televised boxing, this Cuban kayo artist provided the sport with some of its most dramatic and exciting moments. And that, fight fans, is a lot more than many a world champion can say. Thanks for the memories, Florentino. ■

Mike Silver is a freelance boxing writer and historian, based in Jamaica, New York.

New Faces

(Continued from page 56)

on. The only thing that seems to be holding him back is a lack of patience and maturity. You see, if it was up to Raheem, he would be fighting Naseem Hamed in the next nanosecond.

It's his impatience that Raheem needs to control in order to reach his full potential. He's already a good ring tactician who moves well, yet he lacks the ring savvy that comes from experience. Jenkins tries to act as Raheem's boxing conscience, dousing his fighter's impulse to rush matters when he's inside the ring.

"Zahir has all of the ability in the world, but he's still a kid," Jenkins said. "We're still waiting for maturity to set [in]. He has the heart of a fighter. He just needs to develop the strength of a fighter. That comes in time. By next year, Zahir should be where we want him, and should be able to take chances with guys in the top five. Zahir's an all-around fighter. He can box, he can slug. You can't pinpoint his style."

Like many on the '96 Olympic team, Raheem suffered from a spell of post-Olympic trauma, compounded by the gold-medal success of fellow Philadelphian David Reid. Raheem was happy for Reid, whom he respects and considers a friend, but couldn't help being slightly envious. He saw in Reid what he could have achieved: the medal, national acclaim, and a big contract with a promoter. Unfortunately, all Raheem came home with were doubts about himself.

Raheem opened the Olympics by winning his first bout with a 19-4 victory over Jong Gil Hoe of North Korea, then he lost to Cuba's Arnaldo Mesa in the second round. Mesa hit him harder than Raheem thought any 119-pounder could hit. It was a devastating experience, forcing him home way ahead of schedule to try to explain what had happened and rethink his future in boxing.

"I kept thinking, *if this happened to me again, can I deal with this?*" Raheem explained. "Can I do something else? I think the Olympic experience changed me a little bit. I moped around. I was in a dif-

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ferent world. It was like being in a 25-year marriage and finding out your wife is cheating on you. I was depressed all of the time. But I find myself always coming back to the gym. It's like boxing is an addiction."

Actually, boxing has been a habit for Raheem since the age of 10, when he spotted a boxing ring while playing basketball at the 26th & Master Recreation Center. Raheem didn't walk to the ring that first time. He ran up the steps, jumped through the ropes, and proceeded to bounce around, pretending he was Muhummad Ali. He had found something he could be good at.

As an amateur, Raheem compiled a 101-3 record. But winning was too easy, and Raheem often felt unmotivated. His success, however, earned him the attention of the Unites States Olympic Education Center, in Marquette, Michigan, when he was 14 years old. From 1990 to '92, Raheem trained and went to school in Northern Michigan, away from home and his family, away from his friends.

Friday nights were spent in front of the TV by himself, as he wondered what his friends back home were doing. It was all about focus, no distractions. Raheem feels being uprooted like that robbed him of his childhood, and he openly admits the experience was overwhelming. To Raheem, it felt like he was confined in a boxing concentration camp.

"I left, I couldn't take it anymore," Raheem explained. "I came back home, and didn't want to see another ring again. When I left home, I wasn't as mature as I should have been. I didn't have any discipline. Every time I was home, I was chasing girls, riding motorcycles, hanging out. I couldn't do that anymore there. And the weather in Michigan was the worst. When the wind blows off the Great Lakes, it would rip your skin off to the bone. I don't ever want to see that place again."

Three years passed, and as the '96 Olympic Games approached, Raheem started to feel the urge to fight again. Competing in the Olympics had always been a goal, and he wasn't about to let it go. That's when he began boxing in his sleep. Maybe it was a subconscious anxiety attack, maybe divine providence. Raheem is not certain. All he remembers was boxing, not specifically against anyone, and his mother questioning him the next day about what happened.

"He scared me," remembered Gwendolyn Raheem, Zahir's mother. "I never saw him do that before. It might have been he was so obsessed with his career in boxing, that he had to practice in his sleep. He began to go back to the gym after that, because, I believe, it's something he had to fulfill."

Since signing a professional contract with Top Rank, Raheem has shown growing promise. His toughest fight so far came in September '97 against Lionel Odom, an accomplished New York City amateur trying to make his mark in the pro ranks. The lanky Philadelphian had to lose seven pounds the day of the weigh-in, and he couldn't regain his strength in time. Consequently, he was knocked to the canvas twice in the third round. But Raheem had gained something from the Olympic experience, and he refused to stay down. Two rounds later, Raheem rallied to knock out Odom.

"Raheem possesses talent, without question," said Shawn Raysor, Odom's trainer and adviser. "We'd like a rematch. Lionel was able to put him down twice, and he was heavier than Lionel. Raheem has to work on his defense as a professional, but I have to give him credit for coming back from two knockdowns. He showed heart and courage. You have to have talent to do that."

Raheem also has star qualities, including a bright smile and an easy-going, almost-comical way about him. But when a fight approaches, his eyes turn knife-blade sharp and his focus becomes intense.

"When I get into the ring, it's more like a rage," Raheem said. "It's like revenge for me losing in the Olympics, so I take it out on everybody now. I know I have to be more mature, which leads right back to being impatient. I'm making changes, but I'm improving every time I fight. I want to be the undisputed world champion in three different weight classes, whether it's losing or gaining weight. It's my ultimate goal. That, and fighting in front of 100,000 people in a stadium."

Don't doubt him. Remember, Raheem has had a habit of making dreams become reality. ■

The RING

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were complied as of March 1998, the WBC as of April 1998, and the IBF as of April 1998.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	C	C
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	1	2	7
Ray Mercer (USA)	2	3	4
John Ruiz (USA)	3	5	–
Oliver McCall (USA)	4	–	–
David Tua (NZ)	5	–	–
Larry Donald (USA)	6	–	12
Buster Douglas (USA)	7	–	–
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	8	–	–
Axel Schulz (GER)	9	–	–
Jerry Ballard (USA)	10	–	10
Henry Akinwande (GB)	–	1	5
Jade Scott (USA)	19	4	–
Michael Moorer (USA)	22	6	6
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	7	–
Michael Grant (USA)	15	8	–
Orlin Norris (USA)	–	9	–
Vaughn Bean (USA)	–	10	1
Francois Botha (SA)	17	11	2
Hasim Rahman (USA)	27	–	3
Obed Sullivan (USA)	–	–	8
Chris Byrd (USA)	18	–	9

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	–	–	C
Johnny Nelson (GB)	1	–	–
Nate Miller (USA)	2	2	6
Jacob Mofokeng (SA)	3	10	3
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	4	–	–
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	5	–	11
Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP)	6	–	–
Dale Brown (CAN)	7	–	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	8	3	1
Darren Corbett (IRE)	9	6	10
Saul Montana (MEX)	10	–	–
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	1	–
Tiwon Taylor (USA)	28	4	7
Ken Murphy (USA)	13	5	4
Stefan Anghem (SWI)	18	7	12
Terry Dunstan (GB)	–	8	–
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Faustino Gonzalez (COL)	–	–	5
Uriah Grant (USA)	–	–	8
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	–	9

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	3	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	C	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Richard Frazier (USA)	1	5	6
Michael Nunn (USA)	2	–	–
Montell Griffin (USA)	3	–	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	4	4	12
Jorge Castro (ARG)	5	–	–
Ole Klemetsen (NOR)	6	7	5
Ken Bowman (USA)	7	8	8
Fabian Chancelay (ARG)	8	10	–
Mark Prince (GB)	9	–	–
Lincoln Carter (USA)	10	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	1	–
Dario Matteoni (ARG)	–	2	–
Richard Hall (USA)	23	6	4
Anthony Bigeni (AUS)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	21	–	3
Mark Prince (GB)	–	–	7
Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP)	–	–	9
David Telesco (USA)	28	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Richie Woodhall (GB)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	C
Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA)	1	–	–
Robin Reid (GB)	2	–	–
Thulane Malinga (SA)	3	–	–
Dean Francis (GB)	4	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	5	5	4
Eric Lucas (CAN)	6	7	–
Antoine Byrd (USA)	7	6	–
Mauricio Amaral (BRA)	8	4	3
Omar Sheika (USA)	9	–	–
Joseph Kiwanuka (UGA)	10	–	5
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	–	1	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	17	2	–
Dean Francis (GB)	–	3	12
Herol Graham (GB)	–	8	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	9	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	15	10	6
Antoine Byrd (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Reginaldo Andrade (BRA)	14	–	7
Byron Mitchell (USA)	22	11	8
Rick Thornberry (AUST)	–	–	9
Robert Coehlo (BRA)	18	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	11	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	1	–	–
Stephane Ouelette (CAN)	2	12	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	3	5	3
Julio Cesar Vazquez (ARG)	4	–	–
Kevin Palmer (USA)	5	–	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	6	–	–
Robert Allen (USA)	7	2	1
Alex Zaitzev (RUS)	8	–	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	9	11	–
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	10	–	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	1	–
Peter Venancio (BRA)	–	3	9
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	4	7
Anthony Andrews (GUY)	19	6	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	7	–
Abdula Ramadan (CAN)	–	8	4
Roberto Duran (PAN)	–	9	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	–	10	5
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	2
Dan Trevino (USA)	–	–	6
Urbano Gurrola (MEX)	–	–	8
Rogerio Cacciatore (BRA)	21	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Mullings (USA)	C	–	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	–	C	–
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	–	–	C
Ahmed Dottuev (BALK)	1	10	10
Tony Marshall (USA)	2	3	–
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	3	9	–
Terry Norris (USA)	4	–	12
Robert West (USA)	5	–	–
Kookyui Song (KOR)	6	–	–
Oba Carr (USA)	7	–	–
Said Bennajem (FRA)	8	–	–
Nick Rupa (USA)	9	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	10	2	–
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	1	–
Tony Menefee (USA)	–	4	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	30	5	–
Jason Papillion (USA)	22	6	3
Andrew Murray (GUY)	–	7	5
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	–	8	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Aaron Davis (USA)	–	–	4
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	23	–	6
Raul Marquez (USA)	15	12	7
Sergio Luciano (BRA)	–	–	8
Fernando Vargas (USA)	18	–	9

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Patrick Charpentier (FRA)	1	–	7
Derrell Coley (USA)	2	5	5
James Page (USA)	3	–	–
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	4	12	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	5	–	–
Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)	6	–	–
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	7	9	12
Suk Hyun Yun (KOR)	8	–	–
Michele Piccirillo (ITA)	9	8	–
Sergio Acuna (ARG)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	–	2	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	–	3	–
Oba Carr (USA)	–	4	11
Juan Negron (PR)	26	6	–
Jeff Malcolm (AUSTRL)	–	7	–
Juan Carlos Candelo (COL)	–	10	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	1
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	2
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	3
Vernon Forrest (USA)	11	–	4
Mahenge Zulu (ZAI)	–	–	6

Juan Negron (PR)	–	–	8
Walter Saporiti (ARG)	–	–	9
Adrian Stone (GB)	–	–	10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	–	1
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	C	–
Vince Phillips (USA)	–	–	C
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	1	3	–
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	2	4	–
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	3	2	6
Rafael Ruelas (MEX)	4	–	–
Reggie Green (USA)	5	7	8
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	6	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	7	1	2
Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR)	8	–	–
Ricardo Silva (ARG)	9	–	–
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	10	–	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	5	3
Freddy Rojas (CHILE)	21	6	4
Julio Ortiz (VEN)	–	8	–
Guillermo Mosquera (COL)	–	9	–
Hisao Arai (JPN)	–	10	–
Terron Millett (USA)	–	–	5
Jan Bergman (SA)	11	11	7
Rafael Ruelas (USA)	–	–	9
Alex Carillo (COL)	–	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	C	–
Shane Mosley (USA)	–	–	C
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	1	–	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	2	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	3	–	–
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	4	–	–
Israel Cardona (USA)	5	6	2
Billy Schwer (GB)	6	3	12
Jong Kwon Baek (KOR)	7	–	–
Eduardo Morales (ARG)	8	2	1
Dick Yoshimura (JAP)	9	9	–
Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA)	10	–	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	–	1	–
Ceppy Holman (INDO)	–	4	–
Fred Ladd (USA)	–	5	6
Colin Dunne (GB)	26	7	–
Phillip Holiday (SA)	–	8	5
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	10	4
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	–	–	3
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	–	7
Demetrius Ceballos (USA)	–	–	8
John-John Molina (PR)	16	–	9
Dario Esais (COL)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	C	–	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	C	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	–	C
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	–	–
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	2	5	9
Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS)	3	4	–
Justin Juuko (UGA)	4	7	–
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	5	–	–
Tracy Patterson (USA)	6	–	8
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	7	–	–
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	8	–	–
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	9	–	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	10	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	1	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	2	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	22	3	–
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	–	6	–
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	8	–
Djamel Lifa (FRA)	12	9	–
Antonio Hernandez (MEX)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jaime Rangel (COL)	–	–	3
Ramon Ledon (CUBA)	–	–	4
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	15	–	5
Arnulfo Castillo (USA)	–	–	6
Harold Warren (USA)	–	–	7
Tsutomu Yasuda (JAP)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	C	–	–
Vacant	–	C	–
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	C
Cesar Soto (MEX)	1	–	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	2	–	–
Paul Ingle (GB)	3	–	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	4	–	–
Carlos Rios (ARG)	5	10	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	6	12	–
Dramane Nabaloun (BKF)	7	–	10
Billy Hardy (GB)	8	9	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	9	–	–

Steve Robinson (GB)	10	–	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	13	1	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	2	–
Genaro Rios (NIC)	–	3	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	4	5
Frederic Perez (FRA)	–	5	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	26	6	2
Victor Polo (COL)	–	7	1
Chamopekt Chorchamuang (THAI)	–	8	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	11	3
David Santos (USA)	–	–	4
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	6
Edward Barrios (COL)	19	–	7
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	25	–	8
Teofilo Carranza (PER)	–	–	9

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	–	C	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	C
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	1	–	–
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	2	–	–
Spencer Oliver (GB)	3	3	3
Michael Brodie (GB)	4	11	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	5	8	–
Jose Luis Bueno (MEX)	6	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	7	–	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	8	2	–
Yonghoon Lee (KOR)	9	–	–
Serge Poilblan (FRA)	10	7	–
Carlos Barreto (VEN)	–	1	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	4	–
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	5	–
John Johnson (USA)	–	6	5
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	27	9	–
Choe Chol Su (KOR)	–	10	–
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Nurhuda (INDO)	–	–	4
Anell Barotillo (AUSTRL)	16	–	6
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	7
Ariston Clayton (USA)	13	–	8
Esteban Morales (COL)	–	–	9
Ernesto Gray (COL)	28	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	C	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Paul Ayala (USA)	1	2	12
Adan Vargas (MEX)	2	–	7
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	3	–	5
Jorge Monsalvo (COL)	4	–	–
Danny Romero (USA)	5	–	–
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	6	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	7	4	–
Masahiko Nakamura (JAP)	8	–	–
In Jin Chi (KOR)	9	–	–
John Michael Johnson (USA)	10	–	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	1	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	11	3	–
Yong Hoon Lee (KOR)	–	5	–
Daorung C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	6	–
Sahoiu Phaisarn Gym (THA)	–	7	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	22	8	–
Jose Rojas (VEN)	–	9	–
Steve Dotse (GHA)	–	10	–
Adrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jesus Perez (COL)	18	–	3
Juan Sanchez (COL)	–	–	4
Alberto Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	6
Oscar Garro (ARG)	12	–	8
Cesar Singo (ECU)	–	–	9
Willy Perdomo (DR)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	C	–	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	–	C	–
Johnny Tapia (USA)	–	–	C
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	1	6	–
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	–	–
Luis Benavides (COL)	3	–	–
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	4	–	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	5	10	–
Adonis Cruz (NIC)	6	–	–
Victor Godoy (ARG)	7	–	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	8	–	–
Genaro Garcia (MEX)	9	–	–
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	10	–	3
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	27	1	4
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	2	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	3	–
Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI)	–	4	–
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	5	12
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	–	7	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	25	8	–

Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	–	9	–
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	1
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	2
Sombak Singchawan (THAI)	–	–	5
Ernesto Briceno (VEN)	–	–	6
Jaji Sibali (SA)	–	–	7
Solo Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	8
Joel Luna (MEX)	–	–	9
Pedro Rincon (COL)	–	–	10

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	C	–	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	1	10	–
Raul Juarez (MEX)	2	–	–
David Guerault (FRA)	3	8	9
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	4	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	5	–	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	6	–	–
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	7	5	11
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	8	–	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	9	–	–
Chokchai Chokviwat (THAI)	10	–	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	1	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	–
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	–	3	6
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	4	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	11	6	–
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	7	3
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	9	–
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	4
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	5
Ilido Julio (COL)	17	–	7
Arthur Johnson (USA)	–	11	8
Adey Lewis (GB)	15	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	–	C
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	1	–	–
Yosam Choi (KOR)	2	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	3	1	2
Phanieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	4	–	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	5	–	–
Edgar Cardenas (MEX)	6	–	–
Sangik Yang (KOR)	7	–	–
Sandre Oviedo (ARG)	8	–	–
Oscar Andrade (MEX)	9	4	–
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	10	–	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	2	7
Suzuki Kabato (JAP)	–	3	–
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	5	–
Oswaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	6	3
Medngon 3K Battery (THAI)	–	7	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	13	8	10
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	–	9	–
Linglom Tawatchai (THAI)	–	10	–
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	1
Onewin Chareon (THAI)	–	–	4
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	5
Gill Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	6
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	17	–	8
Hernan Berrio (COL)	–	–	9

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	C	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	C
Rocky Lin (JAP)	1	1	–
Wandee Chareon (THAI)	2	–	–
Payak Nakornluang (THAI)	3	8	–
Carmelo Caceres (PHIL)	4	–	6
Lindi Memani (SA)	5	12	–
Myung Sup Park (KOR)	6	–	–
Domingo Guillen (DR)	7	–	–
Sang Chul Lee (KOR)	8	–	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	9	9	2
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	10	–	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	2	–
Ronnie Magramo (PHIL)	–	3	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	4	–
Satoru Abe (JAP)	17	5	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	6	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	–	7	–
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	10	–
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	–	–	1
Ratanapol Sow Voraphin (THAI)	–	–	3
Ala Villamor (PHIL)	–	–	4
Juan Herrera (COL)	–	–	5
Boy Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	7
Daniel Reyes (COL)	16	–	8
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	9
Denkaosan Kaowichit (THAI)	–	–	10

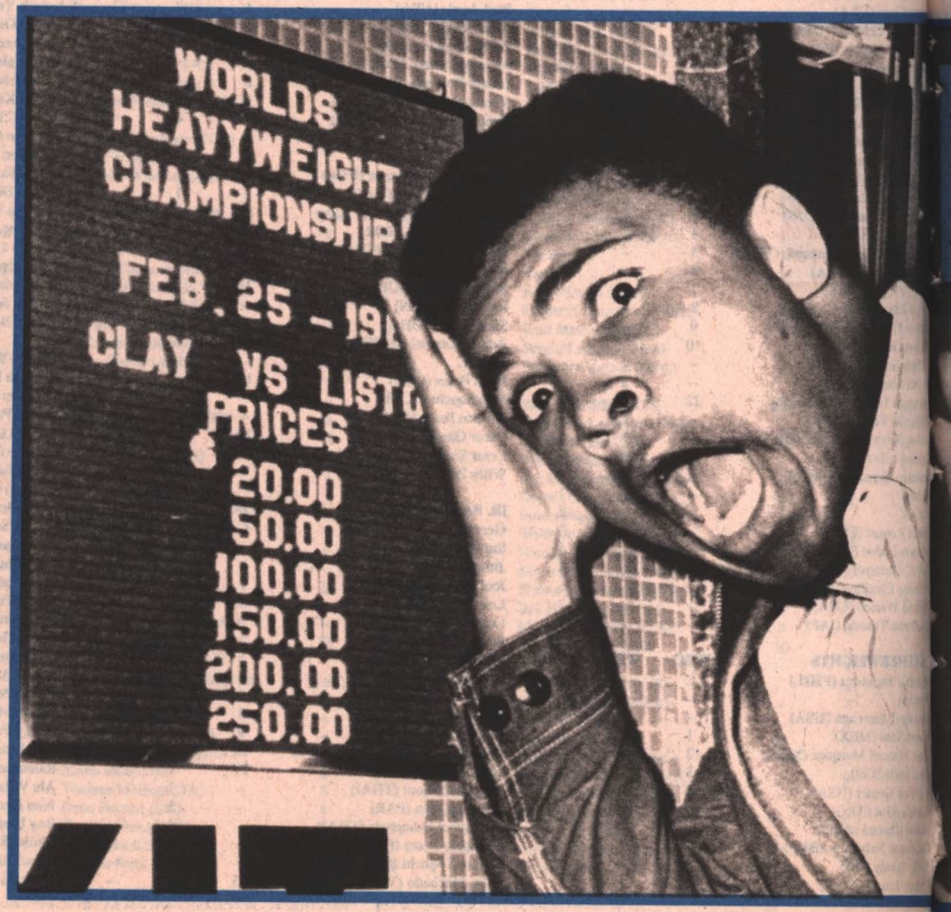
RING CLASSIC

UNEASY RESTS BOXER'S NOGGIN WEARING CROWN

By Lester Bromberg

The heavyweight championship is indisputably the most important thing in boxing and it can be romanticized into the open sesame to untroubled happiness. You know the way people look at it—the man who owns the heavyweight title has the world on a string ... big income, hero-worship from all sides, and a status and image good presumably for years and years after their active fighting days have ended. But how often does this square with reality? From the early years of Queensbury royalty to the present, the big men too often have had big problems.

A psychologist likely would explain the situation in terms of human experience. In other



From THE RING, September 1968

words, what anybody strives for will change by the time he achieves his goal—and attaining it will change him. In much the same way, he is viewed differently once he gets to the top. Scan the long-term kaleidoscope of the heavyweight championship. You'll see that, under success, stresses are heightened and minor irritations become major hurts. In fact, it's harder to live with yourself at the summit than at any other stage of your career.

Timely examples are the young man who now holds or doesn't hold, depending on your viewpoint, the heavyweight championship, Cassius Clay, and the man he dethroned, Sonny Liston.

Talkative, brash Olympian Clay appeared to be suited to his role, and the sports public appeared ready, even eager, for his arrival. He was a winning fighter, a candidly self-confident fighter, and he made his cockiness palatable with a sense of humor, which would make itself felt when the tedium became a bit onerous. Some sourdoughs questioned the soundness of his back-off, pull-away defense, but, by and large, there was an oversized welcome mat.

Few applauded the fight in which he succeeded Liston as champion, and even fewer were to approve of their second set-to. Yet the human tintype was in focus. It had been the American Dream—a kid from Louisville, Kentucky, who'd been in love with boxing since he was a tyke, who'd carried this country's colors to the light heavyweight championship of the 1960 Olympics in Rome, and who now was the world's number-one professional fighter.

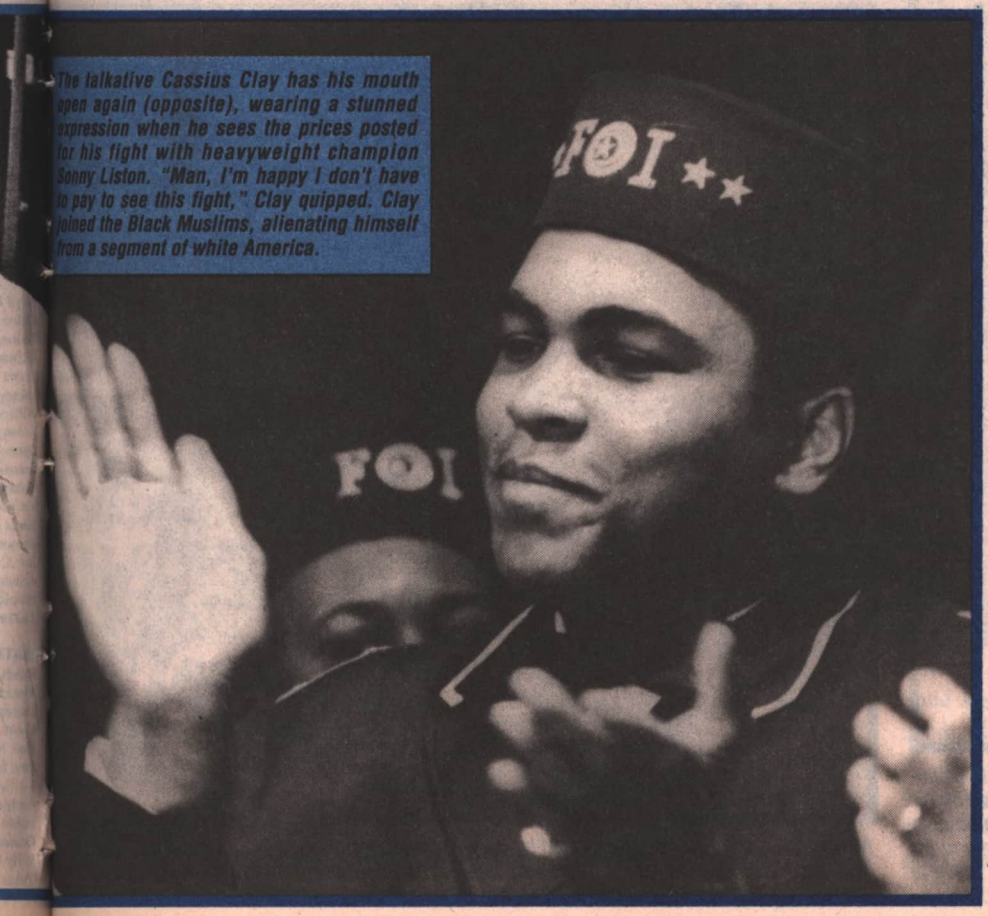
Previously, in general discussion, the aspect of change within the ladder-climber was touched on by this writer. Well, the youth who once gloried in telling interviewers his name in full was Cassius Marcellus Clay III now began taking people to task for addressing him as "Cassius."

In a gem of the English language, it had been asked "What's in a name?" And it had been said that "A rose is just as sweet by any other name." Obviously, he wasn't taking into account these verities. He complained: "Cassius Clay is a 'slave name,' I didn't choose it and I don't want it. I am Muhammad Ali, a 'free name,'—it means 'Beloved of God'—and I insist that people use it in speaking of and to me."

This, of course, was part of his open espousal of the Black Muslims, whose doctrine and viewpoint are hopelessly hinged to racial antagonism. However, all such narrowness was banished in boxing voluntarily 30 years ago. Signalled by Henry Armstrong and others, a quiet revolution shattering race discrimination had been installed and continued.

What ensued was capture of the title in all major weight classes by American Negroes, along with dominance of televised boxing by American Negroes. The best testimony of this came from Dick Gregory, keen-witted Negro commentator on life in these United States and a long-time battler for civil rights. Noting the high unemployment of Negroes, he said: "Only place I see Negroes getting full employment opportunity is at the TV fights."

But Clay wasn't recognizing progress, including the very important part it had played in making it possible for him to scale the heights. In joining the Black Muslims, he set himself apart from the mainstream of American thinking, which is geared toward better conditions and better relations for all. To those who properly take pride in pioneering by the fight game, this was a searing affront. Negroes, among others, have been irked. And the young man thus had created a big problem for himself.

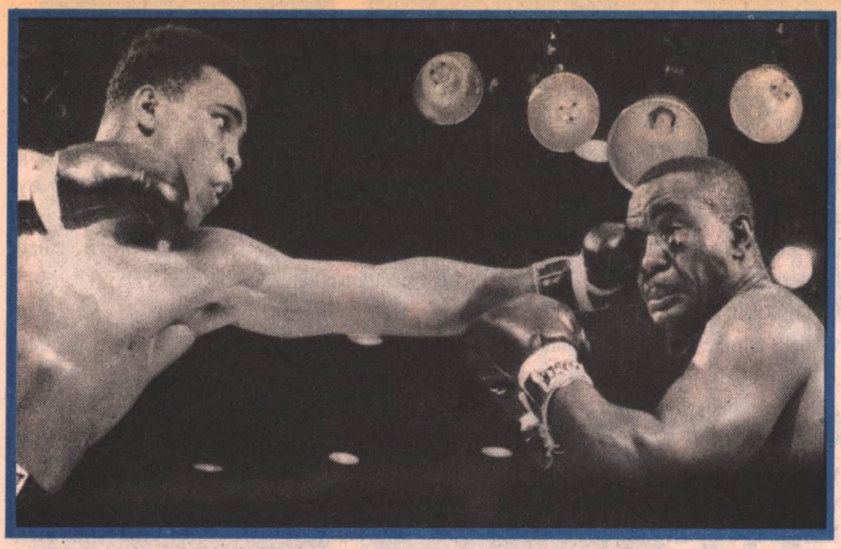


The talkative Cassius Clay has his mouth open again (opposite), wearing a stunned expression when he sees the prices posted for his fight with heavyweight champion Sonny Liston. "Man, I'm happy I don't have to pay to see this fight," Clay quipped. Clay joined the Black Muslims, alienating himself from a segment of white America.

He professes to enjoy being disliked. He insists that "it makes me fight harder." For a time possibly, it might make sense. But approbation by the populace has never been the long-range objective of any human being—and beneath the posturing and declaiming he remains the little boy from Louisville, who yearned for cheers and the identification of "being somebody."

Whatever the future holds for Clay (or Ali), his case is no precedent. In one form or another, heavyweight champions have made things tough for themselves.

Go back to John L. Sullivan. In the days when he was rolling to glory, he had the plain and fancy firmly behind him. It is



Shortly after winning the heavyweight title from Sonny Liston, Clay stirred up a great deal of controversy by demanding that he be called Muhammad Ali. Liston's days at the top were also marked by controversy, from his notorious reputation to his appalling efforts against Clay.

recorded that, when he destroyed Paddy Ryan and went to New Orleans to celebrate, "They treated me like a lord."

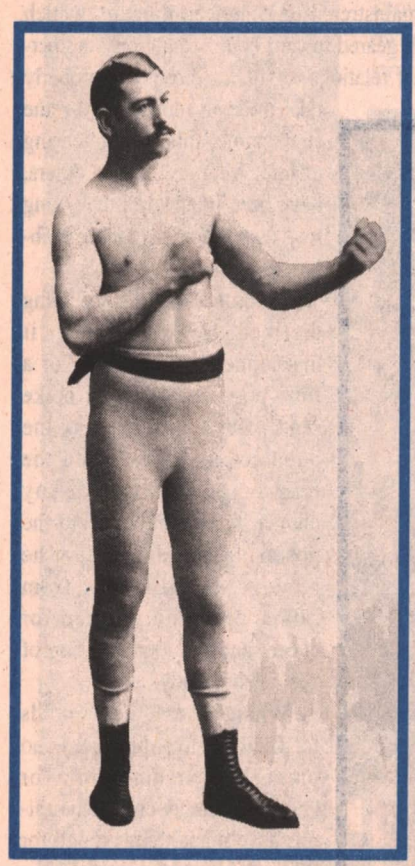
Historians also recall public reaction when *Police Gazette* publisher Richard K. Fox belittled Sullivan and favored Jake Kilrain for a *Gazette* belt. The fans of Boston, Sullivan's native city, responded by giving their hero a jeweled-encrusted $10,000 belt. At the time, he made his well-remembered declaration: "Alongside of this one, any belt the *Police Gazette* could put up would be just a dog-collar."

Subsequently, under the flawless tra ing of William Muldoon, he complete deflated Kilrain at Richburg, Mississip This fight was staged in defiance of th law, and he was prosecuted by the state o Mississippi. Then someone got the cham pion's ear. He accused Muldoon, his bes friend though harshest critic, of havin offered to turn state's evidence agains him, and announced he was firin Muldoon as his trainer.

Anyone with a modicum of judgment knew Muldoon's nickname of "The Solid Man" had been earned through years o loyalty and straightforwardness. From San Francisco to New York, contemporaries buzzed over Sullivan's stupidity. And Muldoon didn't let this aberration go unanswered.

"I have looked after, protected, and done everything possible for this man," he said of Sullivan. "When I agreed to train him for the Kilrain fight, he was a drunken, bloated, helpless mass of flesh and bone, and without a dollar to his name. He is an ingrate, a loafer, a braggart, and a liar."

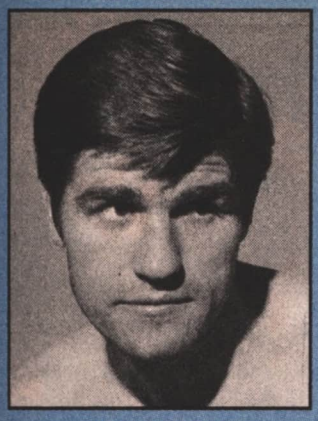
Then Muldoon predicted: "Let's see what he can do for himself. I predict tha



John L. Sullivan, the first heavyweight champion of the gloved era, had a big appetite for life and an ego to match it. Under the training of William Muldoon, Sullivan won some of his biggest fights. Firing Muldoon would prove to be one of Sullivan's greatest mistakes.

As champion, Jack Johnson was hated by many for the color of his skin as well as his flamboyant lifestyle. He fell into further disfavor with this public flogging of former titleholder Jim Jeffries, tormenting the creaky ex-champ for 15 rounds before stopping him.

THE RING RATINGS, September 1968



Nino Benvenuti

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Cassius Clay, Houston, TX
1. **Joe Frazier**, Philadelphia, PA
2. **Jimmy Ellis**, Louisville, KY
3. **Jerry Quarry**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Manuel Ramos**, Mexico
5. **Oscar Bonavena**, Argentina
6. **Leotis Martin**, Philadelphia, PA
7. **Eduardo Corletti**, England
8. **Thad Spencer**, Portland, OR
9. **Henry Clark**, San Francisco, CA
10. **Boone Kirkman**, Seattle, WA

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bob Foster, Washington, D.C.
1. **Dick Tiger**, Biafra
2. **Gregorio Peralta**, Argentina
3. **Jose Torres**, Puerto Rico
4. **Mark Tessman**, Houston, TX
5. **Harold Johnson**, Philadelphia, PA
6. **Bob Dunlop**, Australia
7. **Lothar Stengel**, Germany
8. **Piero Del Papa**, Italy
9. **Johnny Persol**, New York, NY
10. **Andy Kendall**, Portland, OR

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Nino Benvenuti, Italy
1. **Sandro Mazzinghi**, Italy
2. **Emile Griffith**, New York, NY
3. **Don Fullmer**, West Jordan, Utah
4. **Luis Rodriguez**, Miami Beach, FL
5. **Ki Soo Kim**, Korea
6. **Juan Carlos Duran**, Italy
7. **Fred Hutchinson**, Las Vegas, NV
8. **Tom Bogs**, Denmark
9. **Gypsy Joe Harris**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **Denny Moyer**, Portland, OR

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Curtis Cokes, Dallas, TX
1. **Jose Napoles**, Mexico
2. **Raul Soriano**, Mexico
3. **Carmelo Bossi**, Italy
4. **Ernie Lopez**, Las Vegas, NV
5. **Percy Pugh**, New Orleans, LA
6. **Manuel Gonzalez**, Odessa, TX
7. **Stan Hayward**, Philadelphia, PA
8. **Musashi Nakano**, Japan
9. **Pete Toro**, Puerto Rico
10. **Lennox Beckles**, Guyana

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Paul Fujii, Honolulu, HI
1. **Nicolino Loche**, Argentina
2. **Bruno Arcari**, Italy
3. **Marcel Cerdan**, France
4. **Willi Quatuor**, Germany
5. **Rodrigo Valdez**, Colombia
6. **Juan Sombrita**, Spain
7. **Johann Orsolics**, Austria
8. **Adolph Pruitt**, St. Louis, MO
9. **Joao Henrique**, Brazil
10. **German Gastelbondo**, Colombia

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos (Teo) Cruz, DR
1. **Carlos Ortiz**, New York, NY
2. **Ismael Laguna**, Panama
3. **Pedro Carrasco**, Spain
4. **Ken Buchanan**, Scotland
5. **Frankie Narvaez**, Puerto Rico
6. **Lloyd Marshall**, Newark, NJ
7. **Rene Roque**, France
8. **Victor Melendez**, Puerto Rico
9. **Akihisa Someya**, Japan
10. **Borge Krogh**, Denmark

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Hiroshi Kobayashi, Japan
1. **Jose Legra**, Spain
2. **Rene Barrientos**, Philippines
3. **Mando Ramos**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Yoshiaki Numata**, Japan
5. **Carlos Canete**, Argentina
6. **Arturo Lomeli**, Mexico
7. **Don Johnson**, Los Angeles, CA
8. **Jaime Valladares**, Ecuador
9. **Kang Suh Il**, Korea
10. **Marcus Anderson**, Louisville, KY

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Howard Winstone**, Wales
2. **Johnny Famechon**, Australia
3. **Fighting Harada**, Japan
4. **Bobby Valdez**, San Diego, CA
5. **Raul Rojas**, San Pedro, CA
6. **Jose Moreno**, San Jose, CA
7. **Shozo Saijyo**, Japan
8. **Dwight Hawkins**, Los Angeles, CA
9. **Jose Jimenez**, Mexico
10. **Roy DeFilippas**, San Diego, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Lionel Rose, Australia
1. **Takao Sakurai**, Japan
2. **Jesus Pimentel**, Los Angeles, CA
3. **Eigo Takagi**, Japan
4. **Ruben Olivares**, Mexico
5. **Chucho Castillo**, Mexico
6. **Rollie Penaroya**, Philippines
7. **Alan Rudkin**, England
8. **Franco Zurlo**, Italy
9. **Salvatore Burruni**, Italy
10. **Kazuyoshi Kanazawa**, Japan

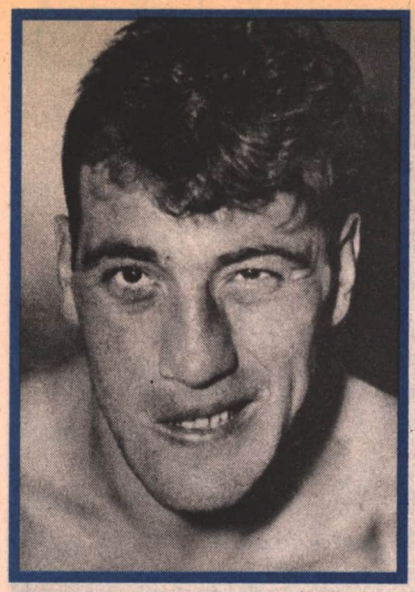
FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Chartchai Chionoi, Thailand
1. **Raton Mojica**, Nicaragua
2. **Hiroyuki Ebihara**, Japan
3. **Bernabe Villacampo**, Philippines
4. **Octavio Gomez**, Mexico
5. **John McCluskey**, Scotland
6. **Efren Torres**, Mexico
7. **Fernando Atzori**, Italy
8. **Walter McGowan**, Scotland
9. **Jose Severino**, Brazil
10. **Horacio Accavallo**, Argentina

the first quality young fighter he meets will take his championship and give him a hiding in the bargain."

Sullivan spent the next few years touring in *Honest Hearts And Willing Hands*, his well-remembered theatrical vehicle. But during this time the star of James J. Corbett kept rising. When the match was set for New Orleans, a moment of truth was facing John L.

Practical considerations should have prompted an apology and at least an attempt to bring back Muldoon. But he wasn't practical, he was bullheaded. He was also fawned on by friends who were using him for their personal ends, and who certainly would have been ousted had The Solid Man returned. Sullivan settled on a handball champion, Phil Casey, for his trainer. Knowledgeable visitors to the camp more than once wryly remarked that he looked fine—for the national one-wall singles tournament.

There was no punishing roadwork and



Primo Carnera, the largest man to ever hold the heavyweight title, lost the crown to Max Baer after reigning close to a year.

scant discipline. He did take off weight and attained an impressive silhouette, but the basic ruggedness wasn't there. Without a first-hand look, Muldoon sensed what was going on. "He's the boss of the camp. It takes more to be boss of a fight," he told a writer.

It is immaterial to review the derring-do of Sullivan's embattled effort at New Orleans. Against Corbett's speed and agility, his courage was wasted. His collapse in the 21st round remains a consequence of his dismissal of Muldoon, as well as a reflection of the winner's abilities.

Move on now to a heavyweight champion who had the physique, the talent, and the personality to have emancipated the Negro in boxing 20 to 25 years ahead of time, but who failed poignantly for others, not to mention for himself. The reference, naturally, is to Jack Johnson.

He was possessed by an unreasoning hatred of the established order per se. His era, the years before and during World War I, was unflinchingly straight-laced and he seemed to delight in challenging all the taboos, especially those of morality.

Johnson treated marriage as if it were a bagatelle. He wed and un-wed, almost at whim. He chose white and/or Negro brides. And, though aware he might be contravening the famed Mann Act, he traveled across state lines with consort, but sans a wedding certificate.

With concerns to boxing, there were occasions when he was more sinned against than sinning. Tommy Burns eased into the heavyweight champion's robe in 1906, after the retirement of Jim Jeffries as an undefeated champion. It was a cozy deal, palpably freezing out the deserving Johnson, because he was a Negro.

But, when Burns took off on a round-the-world fighting tour, Johnson took after him. He caught up with him in Australia two years later. There he beat the whey out of Burns and came home with the crown.

Understandably, Johnson still was bitter, yet two wrongs never made a right. And, when an old, tired, and rusty Jeffries was pushed into a white-hope comeback title fight with Johnson, at Reno, Nevada, in 1910, the latter flubbed a wondrous opportunity. Instead of cutting down Jeffries quickly and mercifully while sounding off with such beau jest as "The only color in the right that counts is on the gloves," he chose to play delaying-executioner. He taunted, humiliated, and bloodied the creaky hero for 15 rounds before dispatching him. His behavior provoked disorders in many cities and resulted in some 30 deaths, Negro and white.

From that day on, he was virtually a hunted man. In 1913, one of his romantic travel interludes provided an opening for prosecution. He temporarily beat the rap by skipping to Canada, then to Paris. He was to spend most of his time in Germa threatened Paris until 1915, when he we to Cuba for his ever-controversial figh with Jess Willard.

The small line in *The Ring Recor Book* says that Willard knocked him out i the 26th round to take the title. Johnso later re-entered the U.S. through Mexic He was convicted of the belated charg and served a prison term.

In the years that followed, Johnso again was true to type. He couldn't, o wouldn't, be silent. He wrote an article asserting he had thrown the fight as part o a scheme that would enable him to com home free of the old charges ... and that h was double-crossed. This red-hot docu ment kicked around for many years. Finally, Nat Fleischer, the editor of THE RING, purchased it with the announcemen that he was doing so to prevent its irresponsible accusations from being made public.

No beaver working overtime on a dam could have piled up as many problems fo himself as Johnson, yet in his later years he was to commit the consummate faux pas. He said: "This Joe Louis boy [as of 1935] doesn't know enough. He'll never amount to anything."

Make the big leap forward to the gener

Baer, blessed with a powerful punch and charisma, was viewed by many as a joke, due to his lack of work ethic and constant clowning.

THE RING, September 1968

Baer did not hold the title very long, losing it to the veteran James Braddock in a lackluster performance. Afterward, Baer, ever the wisecracker, proclaimed, "It's good for a family man like Braddock to win. He's got a lot of children to look after. I don't have any, not that I know of."

ation of Max Baer. In truth, he started up the high road to the heavyweight championship with everything—looks, a punch, personal charm, etc. And the fact that he achieved the title could be credited to the aforementioned assets much more than to his constructive efforts.

Early in his career, he roadblocked himself financially by casually selling pieces of his contract, until they were in the hands of investors, 118 percent of legality's 100 percent. Then he swirled through escapades with various dazzlers that might have ruined lesser men.

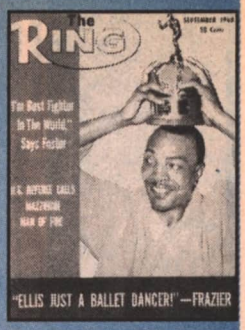
And, when it came to training, he was the despair of the man who had rescued him from his contract dilemma, Ancil Hoffman. Even when the august commissioners came to watch him, he made problems for himself by clowning. Once Bill Brown, a prior associate of Solid Man Muldoon, thundered out of a Baer camp roaring: "I'll cancel this fight. He's a bum."

When Baer later knocked out Primo Carnera for the title, someone interviewed Commissioner Brown on the scene and asked: "What do you think of him now?" Brown's answer was, "I think he's two bums."

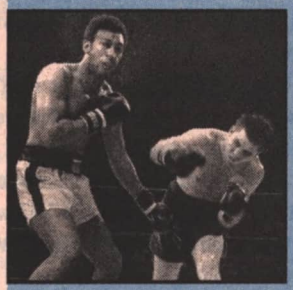
And, in no more than a year, Baer blew the title to Jimmy Braddock, an arthritic, old soldier of the ring, on an inept 15-round performance. In a postfight spiel on radio, Baer deadpanned the following: "Who likes to lose? But I will say it's good for a family man like James Braddock to win. He's got a lot of children to look after. I don't have any, not that I know of."

It was destiny that in later years Baer was to enjoy a long, sane married life with his Mary Ellen and to have sons, one of whom, Max Jr., is a TV notable in the *Beverly Hillbillies* weekly series. Yet irresponsibility in his salad years had made trouble for him when he could have had easy-riding and a beautiful view from the top.

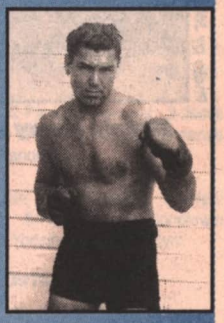
But, as suggested, this has been an occupational hazard of the heavyweight championship. Nobody gets the keys to Shangri-La with the title. ■



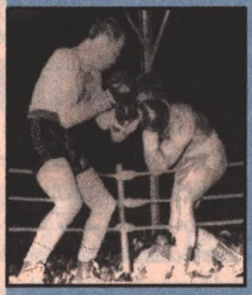
The Cover: Light heavyweight champion Bob Foster proclaims in a story he wrote for THE RING that "I can whip any fighter in the world." Foster, who took the light heavy title from Dick Tiger on May 24, 1968, declared his goal was to become the first light heavyweight champ in history to win the heavyweight title. He would lose against Joe Frazier by second-round kayo in his one bid in 1970.



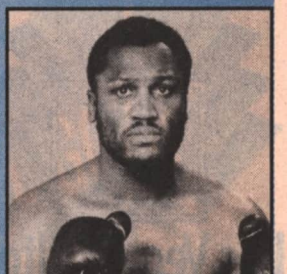
Frazier, Siskel, and Ebert: Joe Frazier becomes a fight critic, giving his impression of the Jimmy Ellis-Jerry Quarry bout for the vacant WBA heavyweight title (pictured). The future world champion felt that the Ellis-Quarry matchup was nothing more than a "ballet dance ... like two kids in a playpen." Two years later, Frazier would make easy work of Ellis, winning by fifth-round knockout to become the undisputed heavyweight champion.



Dempsey Still Famous: THE RING visits former heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey at his famous Broadway restaurant. At 73, Dempsey, the first of the "big-payday fighters," appeared younger than his age. "The Manassa Mauler" seemed more beloved after his career was over than during it. He received more than 27,000 messages of cheer in 1939 while battling a serious illness, as well as congratulations from Vice President Hubert Humphrey on his 70th birthday.



Cruz Control: Carlos "Teo" Cruz wins a 15-round split decision over Carlos Ortiz to claim the lightweight championship. Cruz knocked down Ortiz, the seemingly invincible favorite going into the fight, with a hard right to the jaw in the first round. The defending champ recovered to last the full 15 rounds, but could not muster enough offense to retain the title.



Fighter Of The Month: Joe Frazier is everywhere in this issue. In this case, it was "Smokin' Joe's" fists that won him some ink, as he dispatched Mexican heavyweight Manuel Ramos by second-round kayo. Ramos showed little of his reputed power against the dominant Frazier.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

BOXING ON TNT? MANFREDY LOOKS TO LIGHT THE FUSE

The death of USA's *Tuesday Night Fights* does not necessarily equate to the death of weekly boxing on basic cable, as Time Warner's TNT is the first station trying to get its foot in the door. **Greg Hughes**, a spokesman for Turner Broadcasting, acknowledged that one or two fight cards may come off in September, but, as of early-May, could not confirm that anything had been finalized.

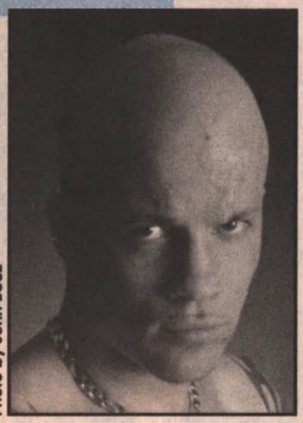


Photo by John Booz

Manfredy: Teaming up with TNT

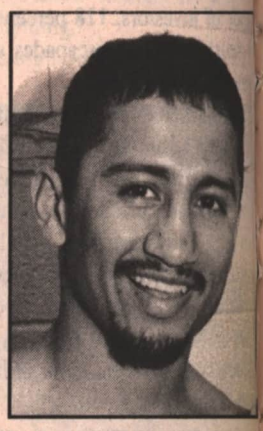
"It's in the discussion stage right now," Hughes said. "Nothing is locked in. It will probably be TNT [as opposed to sister station TBS], but even that's not definite. Right now, we're just looking into the feasibility of a regular boxing series."

Angel Manfredy was mentioned as an early candidate to headline the inaugural broadcast, and "El Diablo's" brother/adviser, **John**, said that TNT was closer to sealing the deal than Hughes had admitted.

"We've already taken the fight," Manfredy said, "although we don't have an opponent yet. It will be in early September, not against anybody in the top 10. One possibility is **Jeff Mason**, who Angel lost a four-round decision to very early in his career that he thought he should have won. We're just looking forward to putting on a good show. The money's not what we would have gotten for fighting **Azumah Nelson**, but it will be great to headline the premiere launch, the first-ever show of a new cable boxing series hoping to replace *Tuesday Night Fights*."

It won't be the same without Sean and Al, but if all goes well at TNT, having something to turn to on a regular basis, unlike the sporadic boxing schedules of HBO, Showtime, and ESPN, will certainly help fill the void when *TNF* goes off the air on August 25.

LISTEN UP



Ayala: First title bid in August

WBC heavyweight champion **Lennox Lewis'** mandatory defense against **Zeljko Mavrovic**, initially expected to happen in June or July, has been pushed back to "at least August, probably September," according to **Main Events' Donald Tremblay**. The delay has been caused, Tremblay said, by a number of factors, chief among them waiting on a purse bid to determine the fight's promoter, and deciding on a site for the bout ... Undefeated Texas bantamweight **Paulie Ayala** is set for his first world title shot on August 23, when he travels to Tokyo to face WBC 118-pound titlist **Joichiro Tatsuyoshi**. It won't be easy for Ayala to walk away with the belt, since the slick southpaw lacks kayo power and probably wouldn't get the decision in a close fight on the tremendously popular champion's home turf ... Heavyweights head home: **Andrew Golota**, **David Tua**, and **Jimmy Thunder** are all planning to fight in front of their countrymen in the coming months. After another appearance on *Tuesday Night Fights* in July, Golota will fight for the first time as a professional in his native Poland in early-September. A possible opponent is recent Thunder victim **Tim Witherspoon**. Tua and Thunder, meanwhile, are looking to slug it out with each other toward the end of the summer in Thunder's homeland—and Tua's adopted home—New Zealand.

Las Vegas Hilton

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Naseem Hamed	Marco Antonio Barrera	8-5	Size and speed edge to The Prince
Naseem Hamed	Wayne McCullough	8-5	Activity and confidence edge to Hamed
Felix Trinidad	Ike Quartey	9-5	Great potential battle
George Foreman	Larry Holmes	2½-1	I liked Holmes in 1980, not in '98
Mike Tyson	Buster Douglas	3-1	No easy fight for Iron Mike

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HEAVYWEIGHT Ch: Brian Nielson 1-Michael Moorer 2-Larry Donald 3-Henry Akinwande 4-Chris Byrd 5-Mike Grant 6-Shannon Briggs 7-George Foreman 8-Oliver McCall 9-Larry Holmes 10-Haslm Rahman

CRUISERWEIGHT Ch: James Toney 1-Nate Miller 2-Marcelo Dominguez 3-Terry Dunstan 4-Arthur Williams 5-James Toney 6-Saul Montanai 7-Johnny Nelson 8-Ralf Rocchigiani 9-Alexander Courov 10-Don Diego Poeder

LT. HEAVYWEIGHT Ch: Drake Thadzi 1-Koy Jonesl 2-Virgil Hill 3-Montell Criffin 4-Ole Klemetsen 5-Henry Wharton 6-Jorge Castro 7-Mohamed Siluvang 8-Frank Tato 9-Ken Bowman 10-Merqui Sosa

SP. MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Mads Larsen 1-Robin Reid 2-Vincenzo Nardiello 3-Henry Wharton 4-Roberto Duran 5-Dean Francis 6- Herol Graham 7-Vinny Paxieriza 8-Robert Allen 9-Thomas Tate 10-Reginaldo Andrade

MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Freeman Barr 1-Julio Cesar Creen 2-Silvio Branco 3-Julio Cesar Vasquez 4-Paul Vaden 5-Andrew Council 6-DarrenMaciunsk 7-Antolne Echols 8-Robert McCracken 9-Dana Rosenblatt 10-Brian Barbosa

LT. MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Raul Marquez 2-Terry Norris 3-Verno Phillips 4-Tony Marshall 5-Julian Jackson 6-Bronco McKart 7-Troy Waters 8-Quirino Carcia 9-Harry Simon- 10-Mamadou Thlam

WELTERWEIGHT Ch: Jose Rivera 1-Pernell Whitaker 2-Oba Carr 3-Partick Charpentier 4-Jose Luis Lopez 5-Alessandro Duran 6-Hector Camacho 7-Peter Malinga 8-Shannan Taylo 9-Larry Barnes 10-Derrell Coley

LT. WELTERWEIGHT Ch: Johar Lashin 1-Juan Martin Coggl 2-Juilo Cesar Chavez 3-Miquel A. Gonzalez 4-Kostya Tszyu 5-Soren Sondergaard 6-Michey Ward 7-Rafael Ruelas 8-Carlos Gonzalez 9-Alfonso Sanchez 10-Charles Murray

LIGHTWEIGHT Ch: Tony Pep 1-Juan Molina 2-George Scott 3-Phillip Holiday 4- Alberto Sicurella 5-David O Tetten 6-Billy Irwin 7-Levander Johnson 8-Edward B. Morales 9-Carlos Fernandez 10-Israel Cardona

SP. FEATHERWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Azumah Nelson 2-Arturo Gatti 3-Tom Johnson 4-Gabriel Ruelas 5-Orlando Canizales 6-Tracy Patterson 7-Angel Manfreddy 8-Julien Lorcy 9-Anatoly Alexandrov 10-Derrick Gainer

FEATHERWEIGHT Ch: Radford Beasley 1-Kevin Kelly 2-Billy Hardy 3-Steve Robinson 4-Claudio V. Martinet 5-Manuel Medina 6-Cesar Soto 7-Juan Man Marquez 8-Hector Acero-Sanchez 9-Carlos A. Rios 10-Mehdi Labduoni

SP. BANTAMWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Junior Jones 2-Daniel Zaragoza 3-Marco A. Barrera 4-Danny Romero 5-Jesus Salud 6-Casius Baloyi 7-Wayne McCullough 8-Rafael Del Valle 9-Spencer Ollver 10-Lehio Ledwaba

BANTAMWEIGHT Ch: Johnny Bredahl 1-Daorung Siriwat 2-Paul Ayala 3-Mbulelo Botile 4-Sirimongkol Singmanassak 5-Cuautemoc Gomez 6-Dario Azuaga 7-Victor Rabanales 8-Oscar Garro 9-Sergio Millan 10-Lakhin CP-Gym

SP. FLYWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Hirosni Kawashima 2-Samson Dutchboy Gym 3-Yokthai Sith Oar 4-Oscar Archinega 5-Alberto Jimenez 6-Hugo Soto 7-Luigi Castiglione 8-Adonis Cruz 9-Suvatchai Chalermri 10-Hiroki Ioka

FLYWEIGHT Ch: Scotty Olson 1-Yuri Arbachakov 2-Raul Juarez 3-Keiji Yamaguchi 4-Sornpich Pisnurachank 5-Arthur Johnson 6-Alex Montiel 7-David Guerault 8-Zohle Mbityi 9-Ysaias Zamudio 10-Yodchinchai Sorthong Gym

LT. FLYWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Jake Matlala 2-Panien Poontarat 3-Jesus Chong 4-Mongkol L.G. Gym 5-Joma Ganboa 6-Jose V. Burgos 7-Edgar Cardenas 8-Carlos Murillo 9-Mzukisi Skalli 10-Pongsaklak Sitkanongaok

STRAWWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Chiana Porpaoin 2-Neo Seboka 3-Solani Pethelo 4-Ratanapol Vorsurapin 5-Alex Sanchez 6-Rocky Lin 7-Songkram Porpaoin 8-Rolando Tuyugon 9-Kermin Guardia 10-Yodsingh Tabaimo Gym

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